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Bombing And Shelling Continue

AERIAL ATTACKS, using both helicopter gunships and fighter-bombers and long range mortar fire in the northern Tamil areas of Sri Lanka, particularly in the Jaffna peninsula, are continuing on an intensified scale despite the recent announcement by the Minister of National Security that such attacks would be suspended. Many innocent civilians, including children and women, have become victims of these attacks.

The London Economist (8 March) reported, "Drop a bomb on a village in Jaffna, the northernmost district of Jaffna, and the chances are that you will kill or injure Tamils. More than 97% of Jaffna's population is Tamil. The district is now being bombed almost daily as part of the government's campaign to achieve, as President Junius Jayawardene put it, "**a military solution** to the Tamil insurrection."

With Love from General Zia

One of the unexploded Pakistani manufactured bombs weighing 55 kilos and measuring 4½ feet long and 1½ feet in diameter.

Although the helicopter gunships have been employed to spray bullets into thickly populated areas for several months, bombings commenced recently after President Jayawardene announced his determination to seek a military victory over the Tamil militants. The bombs used are of Pakistani manufacture weighing approximately 55 kilos and measuring 4½ feet long and 1½ feet in diameter. They leave craters of about 200 square yards and, besides ensuring the destruction of buildings and killing of people, burn and render useless crops and other vegetation.

Although the Ministry of National Security claims that the targets of these aerial bombings are 'terrorist hideouts', the victims have invariably been civilians. For instance, the air attack carried out on March 12 on a fishing settlement in the northern Jaffna peninsula killed three people and injured several others. The victims included a 10 year old boy from one house and his next door neighbours, a 52 year old retired prison officer and his wife. The injured included a 13 year old girl. This attack was carried out by three planes which unloaded 12 bombs. When the planes left, two helicopters flew in and machine-gunned the area.

What the government and the state-controlled media call militant 'camps' or 'hideouts' are usually deserted and abandoned houses in various 'zones' proclaimed by the security forces which the militants use for a day or two to cook their food and then move away. The high mobility of the militants who move from one place to another very swiftly makes the belated aerial attacks purposeless except for terrorising the civilian population. Soon after every attack, even without verification, the government usually claims to have hit a 'terrorist hideout' in which so many 'terrorists' had been killed.

The aerial bombardments and the enforcement of 'prohibited' or 'security' zones of one kind or another have had the effect of driving people from the coastal areas into the interior towns in search of shelter. Many of these 'refugees' are without any possessions whatsoever and have to depend on the charity of various unofficial organisations, which put them up in improvised 'refugee camps'. Sometimes, whole villages, which have been bombed more than once, remain deserted after its inhabitants have fled.

The earlier relaxation of the 'prohibited zone' round the northern coast to allow fishing up to half a mile of the shore has been withdrawn resulting in the total destruction of the fishing industry, with the families which followed this occupation stranded and without employment or means of sustaining themselves.

The government has established 'security zones' within a radius of one kilometre of every army camp in the north and east. Troops are authorised

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APRIL 1986

NO ROOM AT THE INN

IF DIPLOMACY was governed by the human rights sections of foreign ministries – in Ottawa, The Hague, Stockholm, or even Washington and London – Sri Lanka, a leper nation by every moral standard, would now stand isolated and condemned by the Western democracies. Instead, the truth is that Amnesty International and the rest of the international human rights lobby, valiant though their increasing efforts on behalf of the suffering Tamils are, cut little ice in the world of foreign policy, where national self interest, not morality, dictates government to government decisions.

This is one of the reasons why Colombo's bloodstained thuggery, attempting in vain to squeeze the life out of an heroic people, continues to get away with murder. But it is also the reason why, report after report and protest after protest notwithstanding, Tamils seeking sanctuary in Switzerland, or Holland, or West Germany, or Britain, to name only four countries, find it increasingly difficult to rest their heads in peace and safety; or are subject to cruel new restrictions, as with Britain's demand for entry visas; or are constantly in threat of being pushed back into the bloody nightmare of Sri Lanka, where to be a young Tamil is to have lost the right to a future.

And how much longer must the Tamils – like the Jews before them – increasingly strangers in their own country as well as exiles in the countries of their adoption, tolerate the judgments of this or that foreign office spokesman that it is 'safe' for Tamils to return to Sri Lanka; judgments that the situation, in fact a whirlpool of butchery, fear and violence masked from the 3-day official visitor, is 'normal'; or that Tamil refugees are in search of economic opportunity rather than political – that is physical – asylum? Racism, obviously, plays some part, and more in some countries like Switzerland, notoriously xenophobic, than others. After all, these foreign office 'experts' and immigration officials would never accept for themselves, or their families, conditions – of risk of death, of cruel discrimination, of destroyed careers, of lives rotting away in Sri Lankan refugee camps – to which they are so ready and willing to condemn those Tamils who have come to their countries in panic and desperation.

But racism, however strong a factor, is not the major issue. The major issue, until the tide turns fully and sweeps away a Duvalier or a Marcos or a Jayawardene, is that business is business; that a rupee (even if smudged with Colombo's bloody fingerprints), or a Voice of America broadcasting station, or an overpriced dam-building contract, count for far more in the market than the agonies of a people.

As long as this is so, Western state terrorism – which is what it is – will always be tempted to sell yet one more sharpened knife to the butcher in the name of law and order; while Western economic interests will always be tempted to make a fast buck as long as there is a fast buck to be made, whatever the protests of the ICJ, or the Indian delegate to the UN Commission on Human Rights, or Amnesty International.

*The tide, true, has now begun to turn for Colombo: **dharmista** rule, even if Athulathmudali (temporarily) succeeds to the High Priest's saffron mantle, cannot last forever, while the squeeze on aid for a beleaguered regime intensifies with every month that passes. And as the day of Tamil sovereignty in its Sri Lankan homelands also draws nearer, at immense sacrifice, the Tamils will remember who their friends were, public and private, in their hour of tribulation. Moreover, there was another people, before the Tamils, who also were told ('with great regret', 'we are so sorry' etc., etc.) that there was no room for them at the inn; told by the British among others. And six million of them died to prove that the Nazis had been in earnest; they really meant it. So, please, tell us how many **more** Tamils must pay the same price as the Jews, before the foreign chancelleries take notice? Five hundred? Five thousand? One hundred thousand? One million? Tell us, how many?*

Economic Sanctions Against Sri Lanka

THE RECENT call for economic sanctions against Sri Lanka and a halt to foreign aid is most appropriate and opportune. That the call should emanate from no less a person than Dame Judith Hart, the Chair Person of International Alert, is most significant. An acknowledged friend of Sri Lanka, Dame Judith was the person who approved of the allocation of £100,000,000 of aid towards the Victoria Dam project in Sri Lanka while she was Minister of Overseas Development in the last UK Labour government.

The persistent gross violation of human rights and the preferred option of the Sri Lankan government for a military 'solution' of the ethnic conflict in that country have rightly become a matter of concern for the international community. The fact that nearly 200,000 people belonging to the island's Tamil community have been forced to flee the country to escape the oppressive actions of the government and atrocities committed by its security forces, and seek refuge in many countries, demonstrates that the country's problems have ceased to be an internal matter.

Even though the Sri Lankan regime has, in the past, adopted a cavalier and dismissive attitude to the many authoritative reports from reputable international human rights organisations, it certainly cannot continue to do so, when even the US State Department, in its 1985 Country Reports, has devoted a number of pages to catalogue a series of gross breaches of human rights, including summary executions, disappearances, torture, incommunicado detention and destruction of property by Sri Lankan armed forces.

Democracy in Sri Lanka has received a severe beating since the present regime came to power in 1977. The Tamil community has been subjected to unprecedented violence. The Anglo-American publication, Raymond Gaskill's 'Freedom in the World: Political Rights and Civil Liberties 1984–1985' stated, ". . . there has been increasingly private violence against the Tamils, and the government has been unable to protect them or even remain neutral . . . Private rights to movement, residence, religion and occupation are respected in theory, but gangs and even the army have been guilty of widespread looting, destruction and killing in Tamil areas".

The country reeks of corruption with government party politicos lining their pockets and fattening themselves on the misery of the people. Democratic and trade union rights are ruthlessly suppressed under a never-ending state of emergency.

The Sri Lankan regime has also undertaken a massive programme of militarisation while undermining democratic institutions. An unprecedented 'defence' allocation of over Rs. 6,000,000,000 in the recently announced budget has been increased by a further 2.5 billion rupees thereby making the total 'defence' allocation for 1986 of 8.6 billion rupees or 13 per cent of the total budget. All this money is being wantonly wasted on building up a war machine to wreak death and destruction in the northern and eastern Tamil areas. The government continues with its indiscriminate aerial bombardments of civilian centres in the north and east resulting in many civilian casualties. While Jayawardene's so-called Home Guards are no better than Duvalier's Ton Ton Macoutes, the Mossad trained Commandos of the Special Task Force and the Pakistani-trained black-uniformed Commandos are engaged in a brutal campaign of annihilation like Hitler's storm-troopers.

The Sri Lanka Aid Consortium which is due to meet shortly must realise that every cent of aid that is provided to the present Sri Lankan regime for the ostensible purpose of balancing its huge budget deficit will in reality be applied to finance a brutal and genocidal war against a section of the country's population, the Tamil community, and for the suppression of human rights, the Rule of Law and democracy. That is why the Consortium and other countries that provide aid to Sri Lanka should respond to the call for economic sanctions against Sri Lanka.

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THE SECRET WAR

THE CURRENT joke doing the rounds in Colombo is a remark attributed to President Jayawardene. "I have had 43 years of practical experience in politics. Rajiv Gandhi is not yet 43 years old." Despite the obvious truth of that statement, it has now acquired a macabre mien. While Colombo continues to keep stalling New Delhi on its supposed quest for peace proposals and a political solution to Sri Lanka's ethnic problem, the septuagenarian Sri Lankan President's security forces are already halfway through implementing a military solution in the eastern province which has left hundreds of innocent civilians dead and an equal number missing.

Jayawardene's secret war was launched last November when the Sri Lankan security forces escalated their offensive in the eastern province against Tamil militants, with one crucial difference – this time the targets were all Tamil youths between the ages of 14 and 40. The most visible scars of the new assault are to be seen in the small, decrepit town of Batticaloa, which today resembles a war zone with trenches dotting the main roads and machine gun emplacements at street corners.

It is clearly a one-sided encounter. Under the state-of-emergency facade, all Tamil houses in the vicinity of the air base have been bulldozed overnight and their occupants herded into shacks. They were given compensation of a niggardly Rs 2,000 even though most of the houses were worth several hundred thousand Sri Lankan rupees. Further, all garden walls in the town have been demolished on the excuse that they could provide potential cover for an ambush, and replaced with barbed wire.

Simultaneously, the security forces have launched a two-pronged offensive that is nothing short of barbaric. Any retaliation by Tamil militant forces is a signal for a sweeping search and cordon operation in the area. Security forces cordon off the area and swarm through all the houses in the vicinity and pick up any Tamil who is in the 14–40 age group.

The sequel is described in the words of a government employee from Trincomalee: "They took us to the army camp and made us stand in a queue according to age and occupation. Then a man with a sack on his head who they said was an informer but looked like a member of the security forces pointed to youngsters who were made to stand in a separate line. One of them was my nephew who had just finished his studies at a technological college and obtained a job with a Japanese firm. They said he was a terrorist and they were taken away to the detention centre at Boosa."

What happens there is anybody's guess. There is not a single family in the eastern province which has not had a brother, son or husband taken away to the detention centres. Sam Thambimuthu, head of the citizen's committee in Batticaloa, says that an average of two or three women come to him every day to report a missing relative in the Batticaloa area alone. "We only started compiling statistics about missing people about three months ago and we already have 186 names."

SO BRUTAL and reprehensible has been the crackdown and reprisals on the terrified Tamils that all they can do now is unemotionally list out the litany of the dead.

On January 19, 1986, two policemen were killed in an ambush in Iruthyapuram. In the cordon and search operation that followed, 23 youths were gunned down. They included labourers, students, watchmen and three church workers from the local Sacred Heart church. According to an eyewitness, the parish priest, the three church workers were told to run and then shot in the back.

On December 1, 1985, a grenade thrown at an army jeep killed one officer. Subsequently, five innocent Tamil men were killed and their houses burned and looted. They were Kandapar Jeevanandam, 40, Selvanayagam Kulanthavel, 34, Velupillai Ponnudarai, 35, Veerakulasingham, 30, Pillanayanthamby Kandaswamy, 36.

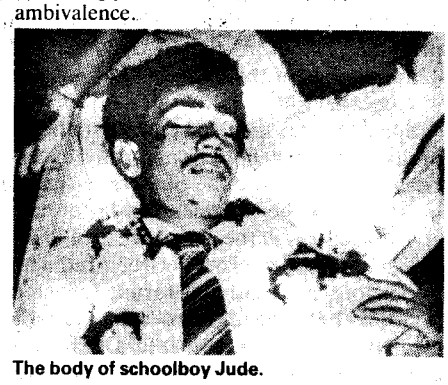
Nine Tamil youths were shot dead on the Lake Road, Batticaloa, on November 11, 1985. Among them were two schoolboys studying for their A levels, Jude Koviliparampil, 17, and Sritharan Sockalingam, 17.

Says Father Chandra Fernando, whose driver was arrested and tortured so badly that he has lost the use of one hand: "The situation is so bad that I would say before we can talk of peace proposals all Tamil males between the ages of 14 and 40 must be taken out of the eastern province."

That, however, seems to be exactly what the security forces want. The Sri Lankan strategy over the last six months – to concentrate the repression by security forces in the eastern provinces rather than the Tamil-dominated north – has one basic and obvious objective. **To dilute the Tamil demand for linkage of the north and east into a single linguistic province with this movement.**

This is essentially why the crackdown and brutality on the Tamil population in recent months has centered around Trincomalee, the port city that holds the key to the success of the Sri Lankan strategy. The population of Trincomalee is equally divided between Sinhalese, Muslims and Tamils and in the past few months hundreds of Tamil settlements have been attacked and razed to the ground in an attempt to drive them northwards. According to Indian High Commission sources in Colombo, there are currently 8,645 Tamils in refugee camps in the Trincomalee district and another 19,800 whose livelihood has been seriously threatened.

What is less easier to understand is the strategy of the Indian Government in virtually turning a blind eye to the atrocities and banking heavily on the eventual success of the peace negotiations. The Indian High Commission in Colombo has been sending detailed accounts of the repression of the last few months but so far New Delhi has played a wait and watch game. Diplomatic sources say that Indian High Commissioner J.N. Dixit is becoming increasingly frustrated at New Delhi's ambivalence.



The body of schoolboy Jude.

There is increasing agreement in Colombo's diplomatic circles that New Delhi is having the wool pulled over its eyes by the Jayawardene Government where the peace proposals are concerned. This was clearly evidenced by the last minute cancellation of foreign secretary Romesh Bhandari's visit to Colombo in early February when it was discovered that Jayawardene's 57-page response to the TULF draft proposals contained not a single concession to the three main demands.

Meanwhile, the hardliners in the Sri Lankan Government seem to be gaining increasing support in their call for a military solution to the problem from the majority Sinhalese, the Buddhist clergy and the opposition parties. In Kandy, the Asgiriya Mahanayake, one of the five Buddhist head monks, told INDIA TODAY that the main Tamil demands were totally untenable. "Asking for the north and east to be linked is virtually creating a separate country containing two thirds of our coastline. As for their own police force, they will use it only to go to war with us." Leader of the Opposition in Parliament, Anura Bandaranaike added that in his view military repression "was necessary to control terrorism".

National Security Minister Lalith Athulathmudali, however, continues to deny that innocent Tamils are being killed. Referring to the Iruthyapuram massacre, he exploded: "Who told you they were innocent? This is typical of the Tamil disinformation service in Madras. It is simply not true. Everyone who was killed in Iruthyapuram was a terrorist."

Clearly, the Sri Lankan Government is convinced that the Tamil militants will have to be dealt with as a military problem quite separate from the political negotiations for ethnic peace. The militants, on their part, are convinced that they can hold out and eventually win in an armed struggle. With both sides unyielding, Sri Lanka is further away from solving the ethnic crisis than it was a year ago. There was, however, some indication last fortnight that the Indian Government had finally woken up to the fact that Colombo's pious posturing on the ethnic issue is merely an excuse to buy time. The foreign office is now busy undertaking a major review of its Sri Lankan policy and there are indications that in its future dealings with Colombo, New Delhi will take an infinitely harder line than it has so far.

Courtesy: INDIA TODAY, March 15, 1986

Houses gutted in Batticaloa.

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UN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

Sri Lanka on Trial

By our Geneva correspondent

SRI LANKA was not an item on the agenda. Even the attempt by some human rights Non-Governmental Organisations to get a resolution placed on the agenda did not materialise. However, Sri Lanka's record of gross abuse of human rights, the indiscriminate excesses committed by its security forces against Tamil civilians and the government's aerial bombardment of Tamil areas figured prominently before the recently held (February–March 1986) 42nd sessions of the United Nations Human Rights Commission in Geneva.

Speaker after speaker referred to the escalation of violence, the breakdown in negotiations, army excesses, arbitrary killing of civilians, systematic use of torture, involuntary disappearance of persons and the senseless aerial attacks on thickly populated civilian centres in the Tamil areas of Sri Lanka.

While the open clash between India and Sri Lanka before this prestigious international forum reflected the growing chasm in relations between the two countries, **the fact that not a single country or Non-Governmental Organisation made any statement, even remotely supportive of the Sri Lankan government, demonstrated the growing concern of all countries about the rapid deterioration of the situation in Sri Lanka in general, and its human rights record in particular.**

The International Emergency Committee on Sri Lanka, an arm of *International Alert* founded in 1985, with such eminent figures as Bishop Desmond Tutu, Andrew Young, Dame Judith Hart, Niall MacDermot, Ben Whitaker, Theo van Boven and Martin Ennals in its ranks, 'to focus attention on problems of group conflict which violate human rights, inhibit development, and result in mass killings and even genocide', came out with its first publication, "*Emergency Sri Lanka, 1986*" in time for this year's Human Rights Commission's sittings. In the Preface to this publication, Dame Judith Hart stated: "Events during the past few years have brought Sri Lanka to the centre of international concern. It is a tragedy that a country which has made such progress since independence in its economic and social development – with its tremendous achievements in literacy and health – should now be so deeply torn by strife. It is even more tragic that it has become a country where human rights are no longer respected. Given the well-documented and authoritative evidence on this, the best friends of Sri Lanka cannot be other than deeply concerned and anxious for its future."

Not content with a mere publication, Dame Judith Hart, who as Minister for Overseas Development in the last British Labour government approved £100,000,000 as aid to Sri Lanka for irrigation projects, appeared at a press conference held on 23 February 1986 within the premises of the UN Headquarters at Geneva and **called for a halt to economic aid to Sri Lanka in view of the record of gross abuse of human rights and violence against the Tamil minority in that country.** The blind rage and paranoia with which the Sri Lankan leadership is afflicted, and its total lack of sensitivity in respect of criticism coming from even its best friends were demonstrated in ample measure when Mr. H.W. Jayawardene, the Sri Lankan President's brother, reacted in his statement on 5 March 1986 before the Human Rights Commission as follows: "We will, Mr. Chairman, continue to safeguard our independence and unity no matter whether there be threats against us or diabolical attempts in certain quarters to deny us international economic assistance. We take pride in our history and achievements, however small they may be, but we refuse to be coerced or intimidated by foreigners who pose as human rights activists." That this was a clear reference to Dame Judith Hart's call for boycott of economic aid to Sri Lanka is beyond doubt.

Many Non-Governmental Organisations, enjoying consultative status with the United Nations, had expressed a continuing concern about the gross violation of human rights and fundamental freedoms in Sri Lanka in the context of the escalating ethnic conflict. A document titled "*Govt. Turns Towards Military Option; Peace Efforts End and Human Rights Violations Continue*" signed by eleven Non-Governmental Organisations was circulated among delegates and observers who attended the Commission's sessions.

Mr. H.W. Jayawardene, who headed the Sri Lankan delegation, in an attempt to forestall any discussion on the human rights situation in his country, sought to divert the attention of those attending the Commission by concentrating his verbal onslaught on so-called 'separatist terrorists' and 'narcotic peddlers' etc. **He also appeared to take delight in denigrating the several thousands of Tamils who had fled from military terror in Sri Lanka and found refuge in European countries by branding them as 'economic refugees', connecting them with the 'narcotic trade' and describing them as 'purveyors of lingering death to the youth in Western European states'.** This he did in callous and contemptuous disregard for the plight of the Tamils who had abandoned their homes, their kith and kin, and their worldly possessions in the land of their birth and sought refuge in foreign lands, very often living in conditions of severe hardship and not infrequently incurring the displeasure and sometimes resentment of some sections of society in the host countries. That the attempt of the Sri Lankan delegate, in the person of the President's own brother, to use the occasion of the Human Rights Commission's sessions to incite hatred and inflame opinion against Tamil refugees by wildly exaggerated accounts of the 'narcotic connection' was seen by many as indicative of the complete lack of concern and consideration on the part of the government of Sri Lanka for the Tamil people of that country.

While the Human Rights Commission was in session, reports appeared in the Swiss press about the Swiss government's decision to compulsorily return Tamil refugees to Sri Lanka on the ground that conditions in south Sri Lanka were safe for them.

That this announcement of the Swiss government was immediately preceded by a visit to Switzerland by the Sri Lankan Foreign Minister, Mr. Shahul Hameed, requesting that the Tamils be returned was seen as not unrelated to the Swiss government's sudden *volte face* on the question of Tamil refugees.

Unfortunately for the Swiss government and the Sri Lankan Foreign Minister, immediately following the announcement to compulsorily return the Tamil refugees, details of a secret report by two senior Swiss government officials, who visited Sri Lanka in December 1985, were 'leaked' and appeared in the Swiss press. Among other matters, the secret report stated: (a) "the security forces are following a policy of terror"; (b) The Secretary to the Ministry of Defence, General Attygala, told the Swiss delegation, "All those who are requesting asylum are criminals who have left the country to avoid pursuit. 70% of those repatriated will be considered to be terrorists . . ."; and (c) "This mission rejects the possibility that Tamils from the north and east could set foot in the south: 'Anyone who is visited by a Tamil is denounced to the police. Mistrust between the different ethnic groups is too great' ".

Following the appearance of details of the secret report by the Swiss mission to Sri Lanka, many Non-Governmental Organisations voiced serious criticism of the Swiss government's decision before the Human Rights Commission, and challenged it to make the report available to the Commission so that it might better understand the true situation in Sri Lanka. Although Switzerland is not a member of the United Nations, and therefore has no status to participate or speak before the Human Rights Commission, embarrassed by the leaking of the secret report and stung by the severe criticism levelled at it, the Swiss government sought and was granted special permission by the Chairman of the Commission to make a statement in which the Swiss delegate undertook to give serious and careful consideration before any Tamil was compulsorily returned to Sri Lanka.

Burdened with over 125,000 Sri Lankan Tamil refugees within its territory, and incensed that its genuine efforts to assist in bringing about a peaceful resolution of the ethnic conflict had

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been reciprocated only with intransigence, delaying tactics and declarations of seeking a military solution by the Sri Lankan government, the Indian delegation's interventions before the Commission were forthright and blunt in their criticism of the Sri Lankan regime. Replying on every occasion Sri Lanka took the floor, India charged that the "violence directed against the Tamil minorities is indiscriminate and makes no distinction between those engaged in conflict and innocent civilians, whether men, women or even children. This is a matter of the utmost concern for us in India . . . The stories related by the hapless and tormented refugees arriving on our shores make it clear that the actions of the government of Sri Lanka have resulted in serious violations of the human rights of Sri Lanka's Tamil citizens living in the Northern and Eastern provinces of that country. The blatant killings of innocent civilians, through ground, naval and air actions, are beginning to look like the victimisation of the entire community of Sri Lankan Tamils by the Sri Lankan security forces. Attacks on innocent civilians have been repeated too often, with ever-increasing severity. They have been picked up on mere suspicion, brutally tortured and some even killed."

Accusing the Sri Lankan government of evading the issues through misrepresentation of the real situation before international forums, the Indian delegation pointed out: "The Sri Lanka representative has questioned the authenticity of reports on human rights violations by the Sri Lanka security forces. Reports about violations of human rights have been based on incontrovertible evidence collected by objective international observers. The human rights problem of Sri Lanka is inevitably of grave concern to the international community as a whole and to India in particular and we remain convinced that it can be addressed only through urgently needed constructive political actions on the ground . . .".

Among the various Non-Governmental Organisations which intervened, the Anti-Slavery Society, the International League for the Rights and Liberation of Peoples, the Procedural Aspects of International Law Institute, Pax Romana and Pax Christi International made substantial interventions dealing in detail with the gross abuse of human rights in Sri Lanka. The Sri Lankan regime's recent crack-down against Sinhalese political and civil rights activists in the south of the country, including their incommunicado detention under the provisions of the Prevention of Terrorism Act and Emergency Regulations, was raised for the first time before a UN forum by the representative of the Anti-Slavery Society.

Although no judgment was pronounced by the Human Rights Commission this year, there was no doubt that Sri Lanka was on trial. And those concerned with human rights and fundamental freedoms would appear to be determined to prosecute this trial to its logical conclusion in the next session.

The Tamil Community – Blatantly Victimised

Statement by Dr. G.S. Dhillon, Leader of the Indian Delegation, on 5 March 1986 before the UN Human Rights Commission

THE COMMISSION on Human Rights is meeting at a time when the condition of minorities in Sri Lanka has become very precarious. The Commission has in its deliberations in the past shown its concern for the minorities in Sri Lanka. The very serious escalation in the violence in the Northern and Eastern provinces of Sri Lanka, however, poses a challenge now to all those in this Commission who are concerned with the human rights.

There is very clear evidence now emanating that violence directed against the Tamil minorities is indiscriminate and makes no distinction between those engaged in conflict and innocent civilians, whether men, women or even children. This is a matter of the utmost concern for us in India. Over one hundred and twenty five thousand Sri Lankan Tamils have sought refuge in India, and around forty five thousand more, here in Western Europe. Under present circumstances, there is no prospect of their being able to return to their homes in safety and dignity. The influx of refugees not only continues unabated, but threatens to continue indefinitely. The stories related by the hapless and tormented refugees arriving on our shores make it clear that the actions of the Government of Sri Lanka have resulted in serious violations of the human rights of Sri Lanka's Tamil citizens living in the Northern and Eastern provinces of that country. **The blatant killings of innocent civilians, through ground, naval and air actions are beginning to look like the victimisation of the entire community of Sri Lankan Tamils by the Sri Lankan security forces.** Attacks on innocent civilians have been repeated too often, with ever-increasing severity. They have been picked up on mere suspicion, brutally tortured and some even killed.

For us, and for all the friends of Sri Lanka, these are developments that we view with justified disquiet and unease. You will recall, Mr. Chairman, that this Commission, at its 1984 session, appealed to all parties in Sri Lanka to continue to take necessary measures to strengthen and maintain peace and restore harmony among the people of Sri Lanka.

There had been some grounds for optimism towards the middle of last year when a de-facto cease-fire had been arranged between Government forces and the Tamil militants, and, through the good offices of the Government of India, talks had been held between the parties to the ethnic conflict. Subsequently, a Ceasefire Monitoring Committee was set up by the Government of Sri Lanka with the participation of representatives of the Tamil minority. These were all heartening developments.

Unfortunately, from the last quarter of 1985, the process of seeking a peaceful solution to the ethnic problem in Sri Lanka has received a serious set-back. The cease-fire appears to have broken down, and the continuing violence has led to an appalling loss of life among the civilian minority population. Tamil confidence in the credibility of the Ceasefire Monitoring Committee has been eroded by the resignation of two of the three Tamil members, who left on the grounds that the Committee was not being allowed to function independently. This is a matter of great concern. The peace process appears to have floundered, and a number of recent statements attributed to the highest levels of the Sri Lankan leadership indicate that the Government of Sri Lanka is determined to first pursue a military solution to this problem. These statements provide the explanation why the peace process has not made much progress, namely, the lack of a firm commitment to a political solution on the part of the Sri Lankan authorities.

India has traditionally had close and cordial ties with Sri Lanka. We value these links. We share a common culture, religious heritage and ethnic background with both the majority and the minority communities in Sri Lanka. We have been, and are, totally opposed to all forms of violence, and we firmly support the unity and territorial integrity of Sri Lanka. We have extended our good offices to bring the parties to the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka together so that a peaceful settlement could be worked out. This is the only path to a solution and it is our earnest hope that all parties in Sri Lanka will renounce the use of arms to solve what is essentially a social and political problem.

In any such situation the major responsibility for restoring the confidence of the aggrieved Tamil minority lies with the Government of Sri Lanka. Conditions have to be created which will enable the minorities to live in harmony and equality with the majority in Sri Lanka as the island is the home of all these communities.

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UN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

Human Rights Violations in Sri Lanka, a Matter of International Concern

Statement by Dr. G.S. Dhillon, Leader of the Indian Delegation, on 10 March 1986 before the UN Human Rights Commission

IT IS a matter of deep dismay and regret for the delegation of India that in his statement this morning the Sri Lanka representative elected to characterise our statements of March 5 as one of "ill grace". I had, Mr. Chairman, spoken on that occasion on a careful, considered, objective and factual basis so that the Human Rights Commission could acquaint itself with the problem and extent of human rights violations in Sri Lanka. The statement of the representative of Sri Lanka constitutes a negation of the spirit of constructive dialogue which has characterised exchanges between our two Governments on the ethnic issue in Sri Lanka and to which the representative of Sri Lanka had himself earlier made generous reference. We made our statement on the human rights situation in Sri Lanka on the basis of our knowledge of the situation and our consequential concern and not in response to statements made by individual delegations. I am now taking the floor to respond to some of the points made by the representative of Sri Lanka in order to set the record straight.

The Sri Lanka representative has questioned the authenticity of reports on human rights violations by the Sri Lanka security forces. Reports about violations of human rights have been based on incontrovertible evidence collected by objective international observers. The human rights problem of Sri Lanka is inevitably of grave concern to the international community as a whole and to India in particular and we remain convinced that it can be addressed only through urgently needed constructive political actions on the ground rather than through efforts to evade the issue through misrepresentation of the situation in international organisations.

We have noted that the Sri Lankan representative has affirmed that his Government remains committed to seeking a political situation to the ongoing ethnic crisis in Sri Lanka. My Government has repeatedly stressed, including at the highest level, the imperative necessity of ending violence and engaging in constructive dialogue. *The crux of the problem lies not in the extermination of those holding legitimately different views but in seeking a political understanding with a view to meeting the legitimate demands of all sections of Sri Lankan society, including the ethnic minority in Sri Lanka.* Our Prime Minister has pointed out that it is one thing to deal with terrorists but quite another to victimise huge segments of the population just because they happen to belong to a particular ethnic group. Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi stated only last week, on the 5th of March, that India wanted the Sri Lanka Government not merely to profess that it desired a political solution to the ethnic problem but also to take specific action towards that solution.

The causes of the exodus of refugees from Sri Lanka, to which we in India have to bear an unacceptable burden, have been fully documented and established by a number of Governments and respectable international human rights organisations. Not only did refugees feel obliged to flee their homes because of violence visited on them, including by police and military authorities, but it has been also conclusively established that conditions for their return in dignity and honour to Sri Lanka have not been created by the authorities. The exodus of refugees is continuing and they have perforce to live outside their country for what now appears to be an indefinite period.

The Government of India has been and continues to be totally opposed to all forms of violence in dealing with the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka and has taken all the necessary steps to ensure that no action of violence against a neighbouring country can be planned or prepared on our territory.

I would like to reiterate. Mr. Chairman, that we have a deep and abiding interest in restoring communal amity in Sri Lanka with whom we have had traditionally close and cordial ties. We shall continue our endeavour to ensure that all parties concerned adhere to the path of engaging in constructive negotiations without further delay and loss of life. We have very recently been constrained to convey to the Sri Lanka Government in the plainest terms that their present attitude and policies would only result in prolongation of the agony and tragedy faced by its people. It is our determined endeavour to reverse this situation.

Sri Lanka, Hell Bent on Military Option

Statement by D. Wanderweid, representative of the Anti-Slavery Society, made on 5 March 1986 before the UN Human Rights Commission

MR. CHAIRMAN, last night the distinguished delegate of Sri Lanka made a long statement about his government's attempts to seek a political solution and the human rights situation in that country. Even as he was delivering his statement, the unarmed and defenceless Tamil civilians of the small island lying two or three miles off the northern coast of Jaffna were counting the casualties, the victims, the damage and the destruction inflicted by the indiscriminate lethal blows of the Sri Lankan security forces.

We are in possession of a telex message of the happenings which took place yesterday (4 March 1986) morning. In ruthless retaliation to a land mine explosion presumably planted by a group of Tamil militants in a naval boat, the Sri Lankan navy went on a rampage in this island of Nainativu – they set fire to an ancient Hindu temple; several shops and houses were set ablaze; at least 10 people were killed and scores of civilians were injured as the navy ran berserk in an uncontrolled orgy of indiscriminate machine gun fire. The Assistant Government Agent caused the injured civilians to be admitted to the Jaffna General Hospital. Over 350 families have been rendered homeless.

Mr. Chairman, this type of indiscriminate violence carried out by the Sri Lankan armed forces against civilians and their property is one of the main causes of concern for international human rights groups. Let me assure the distinguished Sri Lankan delegate that we are duped neither by the propaganda of the Tamil militants or separatists, nor that of the Sri Lanka government.

Mr. Chairman, the violence and violations of human rights have escalated during the last year. Last year, when the Commission met, there was a remote possibility of negotiations between the parties initiated with the good offices of India. Unfortunately, as the Commission meets this year, the developments in Sri Lanka have assumed a purely military dimension. This is best illustrated by the government's use of helicopters and attack aircraft to carry out aerial bombardments into thickly populated civilian centres in what are described as search and destroy missions resulting in many civilian casualties.

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The Financial Times (London) of 28 February 1986, in reporting of these air attacks, said:

"Sri Lanka aircraft and helicopter gunships conducted air strikes in the northern peninsula yesterday in what the Defence Ministry called pre-emptive strikes. This is the second time the government has admitted the use of aircraft, although Tamil citizens committees have complained of air attacks since last year. In yesterday's action, three persons were killed and several injured.

"In an air strike last week, the government said eight rebels and five civilians were killed. An independent Tamil daily in Colombo said that a Hindu priest and a 60 year old woman were among those killed."

The Indian Foreign Minister, in the Indian Parliament, described these aerial bombardments in which innocent Tamil civilians are killed as manifesting 'elements of genocide'.

In spite of the protestations of the Sri Lankan delegate that his government is dedicated to a negotiated peaceful solution, the recent statements of the Sri Lankan President demonstrate that the government is hell bent on a military option. In an interview published in the magazine, 'India Today' of 15 December 1985, the President said:

"The Tamil problem is more a military problem and any military problem has to be tackled militarily . . . We were not ready earlier. Now we are acquiring arms and getting our soldiers trained. We are getting ready for a decisive military action if nothing comes out of the negotiations . . . Already there is a strong feeling that we should stop all these talks and strike again."

The cost to human lives in adopting such a military option is clearly incalculable. Already over 200,000 Tamil refugees are dispersed throughout the world undergoing severe hardship. And India has clearly shown its eagerness and commitment to helping Sri Lanka in arriving at a negotiated political solution. Until such a solution is reached, and the gross violation of human rights, including arbitrary killings, involuntary disappearances and systematic use of torture practised in Sri Lanka and documented in meticulous detail by international human rights groups, including Amnesty International, we as a Non-Governmental Organisation, together with others, will continue to express our concern.

Incommunicado Detention and Torture

Intervention by P. Rajanayagam, Secretary, Human Rights Council – S.C.O.T. on behalf of the Anti-Slavery Society on 12 March 1986

MR. CHAIRMAN, we welcome the report of the Special Rapporter on Torture as a step in the right direction. Particularly most welcome is his victim-oriented approach to his task as well as his identification of a common link between torture, enforced or involuntary disappearances and summary or arbitrary executions, all of which are facilitated by prolonged incommunicado detentions.

Mr. Chairman, almost all the conditions under which torture is practised and listed by the Special Rapporter, are prevalent in Sri Lanka, which make it an ideal example for a case study. The provisions of the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA) and the Emergency Regulations promulgated under the Public Security Ordinance under which Sri Lanka has been ruled for some years create the ideal and classic conditions under which the interrelated violations of human rights such as torture, disappearances and excecutions occur.

The PTA authorises detention of persons up to 18 months and the Emergency Regulations for an indefinite period. Detention orders are theoretically made by the Minister of Defence, a portfolio held by the President. However, Paul Sieghart, Chairman of Justice, the British Section of the International Commission of Jurists, who visited Sri Lanka on an ICJ mission in February 1984 concluded, "I am regretfully left with the impression that neither the Secretary nor the Minister in practice do much more than accede to the routine applications that are put before them, without either testing the case that is put, or laying down firm policy directives . . ."

The PTA and the Emergency Regulations authorise incommunicado detention in such places and under such conditions as the government determines. Detainees under the PTA are invariably held in army camps located in various parts of the country. They can be, and in fact they are, transferred or taken from one place of detention to another without any information being given to the relatives or legal advisers regarding the whereabouts of detainees. In fact, one of the standard conditions prescribed for PTA detainees provides, "The suspect will not be permitted to have any visitors".

Referring to the arrest and incommunicado detention of nearly 200 persons, this time mostly Sinhalese political and civil rights activists from South Sri Lanka, carried out in December 1985, the Civil Rights Movement of Sri Lanka pointed out that those detained were being held in various police stations, often under acutely uncomfortable physical conditions, and in general without the right of access to family members or lawyers. In many instances, the families of the detainees had not been informed regarding their whereabouts.

The fact that persons are held in detention for prolonged periods without their being charged or brought to trial constitutes a clear violation of Article 9 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

Detainees under the PTA are also held in conditions which amount to no less than torture, or degrading or inhuman treatment. There is documented evidence that detainees have been kept in a handcuffed position on the floor or kept chained to the walls for several months. In this process, several of the provisions of the United Nations Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners have been flagrantly violated.

Both the PTA and Emergency Regulations prohibit any judicial challenge of detention orders. Section 10 of the PTA provides that a detention order made by the Minister shall be final and not be called into question in any court or tribunal by way of writ or otherwise. The government of Sri Lanka seeks to mitigate the criticism levelled at this prohibition of judicial challenge by drawing attention to the availability of habeas corpus petitions and Article 126 of the Constitution under which a person whose fundamental rights are infringed can apply to court for redress. In practice, these remedies have not only been ineffective, but also unavailable to the vast majority of the victims of arbitrary and incommunicado detention. In this connection, in a recent statement reported in a Colombo English daily, 'The Island' of 20 January 1986, the President of the Law Society of Sri Lanka stated, "Since it is a tedious legal process which entails inordinate delays, a Habeas Corpus application does not serve the intended purpose. Quite a large number of applications in respect of persons about whom nothing is known after arrest is still pending in the Appeal Court."

The Sri Lankan government's claim that the provision in the PTA and Emergency Regulations enabling detainees or their relatives to make representations to an Advisory Board appointed by the President provides a sufficient remedial mechanism for aggrieved detainees is rather tenuous. A delegation of the UK Parliamentary Human Rights Group which

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visited Sri Lanka in February 1985 stated, "The problem is that it frequently takes several months for the parent's letter requesting a review to reach the Advisory Board via the Ministry of Defence. And, once the Board has made its recommendation, it takes several more months before the Ministry of Defence acts upon it. When presented with this situation, the Minister of National Security first discounted it. Then, on being presented with several dozen cases, the Minister pleaded that there was a shortage of clerks. We found this attitude extremely disturbing."

Mr. Chairman, if one is asked to single out the most important factor which has contributed to a systematic practice of torture in Sri Lanka, it is the provision that enables the use of confessions extracted during detention in evidence not only against the person who makes it, but also against third parties. The provisions of the PTA and Emergency Regulations are similar in this regard. As noted by the Special Rapporter, incommunicado detention under oppressive conditions makes the situation conducive, and the detainees most vulnerable, to torture, while the practice of torture becomes worthwhile and rewarding when information or confessions are made admissible in evidence. This is exactly what the PTA and Emergency Regulations do in Sri Lanka. In an attempt to deflect criticism on this point, the government of Sri Lanka has often suggested that there were provisions in these laws to exclude evidence if it is proved that such evidence was by the use of torture. I can only recall what the Special Rapporter has said on this point. He said that torture by its very nature takes place in isolation in interrogation centres, in places of detention and in prisons where detainees are normally held. In most cases, there are no eye-witnesses other than the victims and the torturers. Secrecy surrounds the practice of torture and this secrecy is created and protected most effectively by incommunicado detention. There are also a considerable number of techniques of torture which leave no traceable marks on the body, although they invariably leave permanent marks on the mind. In cases where the victim is still under detention, it is impossible to obtain conclusive evidence they had been tortured.

Mr. Chairman, the Sri Lankan delegate categorically denied that any person arrested had been tortured or executed. **If this distinguished Commission were to believe that denial, then it would also believe that the Nazis never persecuted the Jews.** The latest Amnesty International's Sri Lanka File on Torture published in October 1985 documents a depressing and distressing catalogue of torture systematically practised in Sri Lanka. I will only cite one example from that report. In this case, the victim was detained in an army camp in late December 1983. He claimed that he was beaten for several hours with rifles, iron rods and plastic pipes. He was suspended with a rope with his arms being tied together. A tray of burning coal was placed directly under him. He was beaten and hit on the soles of his feet. A paste made of chilli powder and water was applied into his eyes and ears and upon his genitals. Ten months later, a medical examination conducted on the victim at the request of the Amnesty International found, ". . . the remaining physical scars confirm the essential story. The multiple faint scars criss-crossing his back are typical of a beating. The scars above each elbow are consistent with abrasions caused by a restraining rope tying the arms together. Paralysis in the median and radial nerve distribution on the left was confirmed at this medical examination in 1984".

As for the Sri Lankan delegate's denial of deaths in custody, Mr. Chairman, here is one example cited in the same Amnesty Report: A young man named W.A. Dayaratne arrested on suspicion of theft died in custody on 28 March 1985. At the inquest, the Magistrate held he died as a result of police assault.

Mr. Chairman, despite the protestations to the contrary by the government of Sri Lanka, the use of torture is widespread and universally practised in that country, particularly those held under the PTA and Emergency Regulations. The use of torture is so widespread that it can no longer be regarded the result of individual excesses, nor simply as an over-reaction by enthusiastic officers. The fact that the use of torture is not an exception but has developed into almost a routine is a reflection of the reality that it has become an integral part of the institutionalised repressive machinery of the State.

The government of Sri Lanka has attempted to divert the attention of delegates of this Commission by raising the spectre of separatism and terrorism, instead of responding to the several detailed allegations of gross violations of human rights including torture, involuntary disappearances and summary executions.

The Swiss 'Secret Report' and Tamil Refugees

Statement by Mr. Hurst Hannum on behalf of 11 Non-Governmental Organisations on 12 March 1986 before the UN Human Rights Commission

MR. CHAIRMAN, this brief statement expresses the views of the following non-governmental organisations, in addition to the Procedural Aspects of International Law Institute: International Commission of Jurists, International Association of Democratic Lawyers, International League for Human Rights, Arab Lawyers Union, International Federation of Human Rights, Human Rights Advocates, International Fellowship of Reconciliation, International Human Rights Law Group, Anti-Slavery Society, International League for Rights and Liberation of Peoples.

We must express our dismay at the decision of the Government of Switzerland this week to reverse its 1984 decision, reaffirmed late last year, not to repatriate Tamil refugees to Sri Lanka. Some 289 Tamils are immediately subject to deportation, and another 5,193 Tamil applications for refugee status are still pending. The seriousness of the situation in Sri Lanka, including the Sri Lankan Government's admitted aerial bombardment of Tamil areas, has been described to the Commission over the past few days by, among others, the delegations of Australia, Canada, India, Ireland, Sweden, and the United Kingdom.

In view of this deteriorating situation, we urge the Government of Switzerland to reconsider its action in this matter.

While this concludes my prepared statement, I would like to bring to the attention of the Commission two relevant press reports that appeared in this morning's edition of *Le Matin* and *La Tribune Genève*. Both refer to a report prepared by a delegation of the Swiss Federal Police which visited Sri Lanka from 14–24 December 1985 in order to assess the situation there.

As stated in *La Tribune de Genève, "The confidential report of the two experts is frightening and largely contradicts Monday's speech by Federal Counsellor Elisabeth Kopp concerning the repatriation of Tamils." With respect to the situation in the north of Sri Lanka, the Swiss report indicates that* ". . . **the security forces are following a policy of terror**".

The delegation spoke with officials of the Sri Lankan Government including the person responsible for defence and security. He (General Attygalla) reportedly told the delegation that "all those who are requesting asylum are criminals who have left the country to avoid pursuit. 70% of those repatriated will be considered to be terrorists . . ."

Le Matin specifies further that: "The mission rejects the possibility that Tamils from the north and east could set foot in the south; **'Anyone who is visited by a Tamil is denounced to the police. Mistrust between the different ethnic groups is too great.'** "

The Procedural Aspects of International Law Institute can only support the conclusion of the Swiss Federal Police that Tamil refugees returned to the north or east of Sri Lanka would be exposed to "great risks". We would respectfully call upon the Swiss government not only to reconsider the implications of the report of its own federal police, but also to consider providing copies of that report to members of the Commission on Human Rights, so that the Commission might understand the present situation in Sri Lanka.

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On Disappearances and Torture

Statement by Verena Graf, representative of the International League for the Rights and Liberation of Peoples, on 11 March 1986 before the UN Human Rights Commission

MAY WE draw the attention of distinguished delegates to our written statement dated 14 February 1985, E/CN.4/1985/NGO/23, in which our organization expressed its deep concern about the widespread use of the practice of 'enforced or involuntary disappearances' in many parts of the world. We pointed out that this practice is totally incompatible with the fundamental principles of human rights and freedoms of peoples enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

We now take this opportunity to deal specifically with Sri Lanka where the practice of enforced or involuntary disappearances would appear to be assuming alarming proportions. As an organization concerned with the rights and liberation of peoples, we are particularly disturbed that this undesirable practice is taking place in Sri Lanka in the context of an ethnic conflict, the main victims of this practice being the Tamil people. In this connection, we wish to invite the attention of distinguished delegates to the Report of the Working Group on this subject, namely E/CN.4/1986/18 of 24 January 1986, page 78 to 82.

The response of the government of Sri Lanka to the 197 cases of disappearances referred to it by the Working Group, is most shocking. In only three cases has the government provided satisfactory explanations as to their whereabouts. In two cases the government claimed that they were in detention, but did not provide any indication as to their whereabouts. Thus of the 197 cases referred to the Working Group, the government of Sri Lanka has failed to furnish any explanation in regard to 194 cases.

According to the evidences submitted to the Working Group, most of the persons who had disappeared were arrested at their homes or in the compound or area where they lived or at their work places. Of the 130 cases of disappearance in 1984, almost all of them related to persons arrested on 2 December 1984. The largest number of arrests concerning 99 men took place in Chemamadu and Cheddikulam in northern Sri Lanka on this day. Members of the security forces carried out the arrests and took the persons in trucks to unknown destinations. The chief government official of the area, the Government Agent, had expressed doubt whether any of those persons were still alive. In any event, these 99 persons, all of them Tamils, have disappeared.

On 4 December 1984, another group of persons were taken into custody. Although it had been announced that they were released, a number of persons were shot by the army the very same day and their dead bodies burnt thus leaving no trace of their identity.

The Working Group also identified over 100 cases in respect of which inquiries made of the government agent, the police and army authorities produced only denials that they were arrested; and in certain cases, it was admitted that they had been taken to the capital for interrogations. However, the relatives could not locate those persons in any of the detention centres in the capital, and consequently they have disappeared.

The Working Group also has referred to another 24 persons arrested on 17 May 1985 in a village in the eastern province in Sri Lanka by the Special Task Force. The whereabouts of these persons are not known.

The case of a 17 year old Tamil youth illustrates the practice of unacknowledged detention in Sri Lanka. Despite efforts by his father to trace his son's whereabouts, the various government agencies repeatedly denied that his son was in custody. However, after one and a half months, his son was released from unacknowledged detention. It would appear that he had been mistakenly arrested by the army. The boy in question has, in an affidavit, given a detailed account of the interrogation methods, including torture.

Besides the cases of disappearances referred to in the report of the Working Group, there are many other cases, running into hundreds, which have been brought to the attention of our organisation. A human rights monitoring body operating within Sri Lanka has produced details of as many as 448 all of them belonging to the Tamil community, who had gone missing in just two months – November and December 1985. By any standards, this is a frightening situation.

The International League for the Rights and Liberation of Peoples also wishes to raise the subject of the widespread use of torture in Sri Lanka. Although Article 11 of the Constitution of Sri Lanka in conformity with Article 7 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, prohibit torture and inhuman treatment, reports by reputed human rights organisations confirm the continued, systematic and widespread use of torture in Sri Lanka.

The death of K. Navaratnaraja, aged 28, is one of the most flagrant examples of the extent of torture practised in Sri Lanka. He was taken into custody on 27 March 1983 and held under the Prevention of Terrorism Act at the Gurunagar Army Camp in northern Jaffna. He died while in custody on 10 April 1983 with 35 injuries on his body. The Medical Officer who gave evidence at the inquest held on 27 April 1983 stated as follows:

"The clothing was stained with faecal matter. The deceased was dehydrated. He had in all 25 external injuries. There were 10 internal injurries.

None of these injuries is of recent origin; they have been caused in stages 7 or 10 days before death.

These are injuries caused by a blunt elongated weapon; it can be a club or a baton or some round object. Of the lung injuries, at least one on the left side, which had a corresponding overlying external injury, could have been caused either by a blow or could be due to an explosion of some kind.

He had lost roughly 2 pints of blood as a result of internal bleeding . . . Manacles could have caused the injury on the arm."

In this case, Mr. Chairman, the Magistrate who held the inquest returned a verdict of homocide on 31 May 1983 and the details of the case was widely publicised. Within four days, that is, on June 3, 1983, the government promulgated new emergency regulations authorising the disposal of bodies of persons who died in custody or as a result of army or police action without inquests or post-mortems. By doing so, it would seem that the government, far from preventing the use of torture, had in fact given official authorisation and sanction for the continuation of this practice to the extent of even causing death.

The Report of the International Commission of Jurists of August 1983 stated, "it is almost the universal practice of the military authorities to physically assault and mistreat these persons (detainees) who have been in their custody with the principal locations for that assault being Elephant Pass Army Camp and the Panagoda Army Camp in Colombo".

Amnesty International has identified the following methods of torture as being practised in Sri Lanka:

- *by being hung upside down and beaten;*
- *by prolonged and repeated beatings with heavy sticks, pipes and fists, especially on the soles of the feet, around the head and shoulders, on the stomach and back, so badly that in some cases bones were broken;*
- *by being stripped naked and beaten on the genitals;*
- *by having needles inserted under the nails of fingers and toes or in the arms;*
- *by having chilli inserted into sensitive parts of the body and being forced to drink heavily salted and chilli-infused water until they vomited;*
- *by being burned with cigarettes and (in one case) having the pubic hair burned;*

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- *by being forced to lie on the floor for as long as six months while chained to the wall;*
- *Snakes (pythons) being thrust into the mouth and ears and made to coil around the bodies of detainees;*
- *Beaten with loaded S/lon pipes all over the body;*
- *Detainees made to carry naked corpses of persons who had already died of torture;*
- *Detainees made to drink urine when they asked for water.*

On 14 April 1985, the London Observer carried the account of the torture to which a 23 year old Tamil youth named Mahendra Kesivapilla was subjected to by commandos of the Special Task Force. According to the reporter who interviewed the victim and doctors at the Batticaloa Hospital where he has been a patient since March 1985. The following is the account given by the victim:

"They handcuffed and blindfolded me and pushed me out of the door. I know I screamed at once because they smashed a rifle butt into my left foot. I could hear my bones breaking. First I was taken to a camp at Kalvanchi, then another camp of theirs called Kalladi. One day they slit my left wrist with a razor blade, packed it with chilli powder and bandaged it. Another time they hammered nails into my heels. They would say, 'Tell us where are the terrorists'. They even threatened to burn me with a metal rod."

In this case, doctors had confirmed that the victim had been subjected to unbelievable cruelty. There were burn marks on his buttocks and arms. Two bones in his arm, the radius and ulna, have been so badly damaged after being ripped apart, he would never recover the use of his arms.

Amnesty International, in its latest Sri Lanka File on Torture released in October 1985, catalogues several harrowing instances of torture confirming the unabated widespread practice of torture in Sri Lanka.

Mr. Chairman, the International League for the Rights and Liberation of Peoples believes that in the matter of involuntary or enforced disappearances and the widespread and systematic use of torture, Sri Lanka is in breach of its international obligations, in respect of which, in our view, Sri Lanka must be called to account.

Extracts from Six More Statements

AUSTRALIA (5 March 1986)

The Australian Government shares the widespread international disappointment at the recent deterioration in the communal conflict in Sri Lanka. We continue to watch developments closely. In the spirit of our longstanding friendship with that country, we have several times expressed our concern to the Sri Lankan Government that the human rights of all Sri Lankans should be respected.

We stress our hope that all in Sri Lanka will eschew violence and renew their efforts towards a peaceful political solution.

CANADA (5 March 1986)

In Sri Lanka, we are saddened by recent reports of bombings by the Air Force in the densely populated Jaffna Peninsula. We deeply regret the loss of life of innocent civilians on both sides in the current conflict and urge the Sri Lankan Government to make its best efforts to find a peaceful political settlement.

IRELAND (6 March 1986)

Recent months have seen an increasing spiral of violence. Terrorist attacks have brought the deaths of numerous civilians and members of the security forces. It is reported that hundreds have died as a result of indiscriminate, retaliatory action by members of the security forces. My delegation unreservedly condemns all such killings, no matter who the perpetrators may be.

UNITED KINGDOM (6 March 1986)

Like other delegations who have spoken in this debate, we are concerned by the situation in Sri Lanka and the human rights abuses that are being committed by the security forces. We have consistently pressed on the Sri Lankan Government the need for a political rather than a military solution to the ethnic tensions in Sri Lanka. We will continue to do so and to discourage them from the idea that the Tamil insurgency can or should be dealt with by military means. We will also continue to urge on the Sri Lankan Government the urgent need to take firm action to stop human rights abuses by the security forces. Similarly we will continue to emphasise in our contacts with opposition leaders in Sri Lanka that a negotiated settlement is the only solution. We are disappointed that there have so far been no signs of progress towards such a settlement.

PAX CHRISTI INTERNATIONAL (11 March 1986)

Article 3 of the International Convention against Torture prevents the parties from expelling persons towards third countries where they will run the risk of being subjected to torture. In this regard, Pax Christi was astonished to learn of the decision, announced yesterday, 10 March, by the Swiss government to repatriate Tamil asylum seekers whose applications for asylum have been rejected. We dare believe that the Swiss government, which has just proposed to the Swiss parliament to ratify the International Convention against Torture, is also informed about the current situation in Sri Lanka. Far from improving, this situation has deteriorated these past months.

INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION OF JURISTS (6 March 1986)

In view of the publicly stated goal of the Government to eliminate all terrorist groups before the end of this year by intensified military action, it would seem optimistic to expect the suffering of the Tamils to diminish during the rest of this year. We fear that it also will be intensified.

MEDIA FILE

If something is not done soon . . .

THE SRI LANKAN Minister of Finance Mr. Ronnie de Mel has warned that if the conflict with Tamil separatists does not end soon foreign aid to the country would be cut. He said that peace was fundamental to Sri Lanka's economy and, as Humphrey Hawksley reports (March 2) from Colombo, his comments have put added pressure on the government to start talks with Tamil leaders.

"Mr. de Mel's grim warning comes at a time when Sri Lanka is being condemned abroad for alleged human rights violations and when the main peacemaker in the conflict India has said it wants to see a workable settlement on the table by the end of this month. Although Sri Lankan officials are scoffing at India's ultimatum Mr. de Mel made it clear that if something is not done soon Sri Lanka's economy would be badly hit. He specifically referred to a meeting in June of the country's main aid-donors who, many believe, agreed to continue the package last year only because peace talks were starting in the Himalayan kingdom of Bhutan. Hopes of an early settlement were dashed when those talks broke down and Mr. de Mel admitted that if a solution was not in sight at this year's meeting then the confidence in Sri Lanka would be undermined. He said that the present level of development was due to massive foreign aid and if the aid was curtailed some projects would have to be stopped. He said the effect would be felt within the next six months should the Tamil separatist war continue.

Another major problem, he said, was defence which accounted for 17 per cent of total expenditure and was ten times higher than when the government came to power in 1977" – Humphrey Hawksley, BBC, Colombo.

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NEWS FROM INDIA

(By courtesy of India Weekly)

Narayanan urges political solution to Sri Lanka issue

INDIA'S MINISTER OF STATE for External Affairs, Mr. K.R. Narayanan, said that the ethnic crisis in Sri Lanka could be solved politically and with the "touch of Buddha" and warned that otherwise the island republic would get into a very "difficult knot which will be impossible to unravel".

"I have no doubt that the wisdom of the politicians and leaders and the people of Sri Lanka will assert itself and realise that in their own interests it was better to follow a political path," he told the Lok Sahba (the Lower House of the Indian Parliament).

Intervening in a discussion on the demand for a grant for the External Affairs Ministry, Mr. Narayanan said that India was playing its role in solving the problem but was not prepared to do it interminably.

India was ready to offer its good offices in aiding a solution whenever conditions in Sri Lanka "improved and good sense prevailed," he said.

Mr. Narayanan said that he had faith that the people of Sri Lanka, especially the Tamils, would be able to overcome their difficulties with the support from the rest of the world.

He said "there is no doubt that the situation in Sri Lanka is trying for us. Though it is an internal problem it impinges on us and will impinge on the region."

NEW FOREIGN SECRETARY

MR. A.P. VENKATESWARAN, Secretary, Ministry of External Affairs, takes over as Foreign Secretary from Mr. Romesh Bhandari when he retires at the end of March.

Mr. Venkateswaran was born on 2nd June, 1930. He did his B.Sc and M.A. (Econ) from Madras University, and joined the Indian Foreign Service in April, 1952, serving in various capacities in Indian Missions in Prague, New York, Addis Ababa, Moscow and Bonn. He served as Commissioner/High Commissioner, Suva from May, 1969 to June, 1971 with concurrent accreditation to Tonga and South Pacific territories; Joint Secretary (East Europe) from July, 1971 to September, 1974; Fellow, Centre for International Affairs, Harvard University from September, 1974 to June, 1975; Minister and Deputy Chief of Mission, Embassy of India, Washington from August 1975 to September, 1977; Ambassador of India, Damascus from October, 1977 to May, 1980; Ambassador and Permanent Representative of India to the UN Offices in Geneva from May, 1980 to August, 1982; Ambassador of India to the People's Republic of China from September, 1982 to January, 1985; Secretary in the Ministry of External Affairs from February, 1985 to date.

Indian MPs concern at worsening Sri Lanka situation

MPs VOICED grave concern over the worsening situation in Sri Lanka in the Lower House of the parliament and urged the Indian Government to take "concrete" steps to resolve the ethnic issue and save the lives of innocent Tamils in the Island.

Participating in the resumed discussion on March 24 on demands for grants of the External Affairs Ministry, members from both Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's ruling Congress (I) and opposition parties called upon the government to take a "'firm", "vigorous" and "stiff" stand in combating the genocide in Sri Lanka.

Any delay by the Indian Government could cost many lives in Sri Lanka, cautioned an opposition All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazagham member. He said that Pakistan was playing a "surreptitious" role in providing arms to Sri Lanka.

He wanted to know the Government's stand on the reported statement of Sri Lankan President J.R. Jayawardene that he would go in for a military solution to resolve the Tamil problem.

New dimension

Another Congress (I) member highlighted a new dimension in the ethnic problem in the island following the reported nexus between Pakistan and Sri Lanka and the presence of the Seventh Fleet of the US navy in Karachi.

A member of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) said both Sri Lanka and Pakistan were being encouraged from behind the scene by the Western powers for their own benefit.

He said President Jayawardene's son, who is the main negotiator for weapons, was in Israel recently and he had personally led the security forces against Tamils in the eastern region.

He said the Sri Lankan president was trying to seek a military solution to the ethnic crisis. The Island Government, he observed, had increased the allocation for defence by 130 million dollars to curb Tamil militants.

Meanwhile, the Organisation for Protection of Tamils of Eelam from Genocide (PROTEG) said in Madras that *at least 50 Hindu priests had been killed and nearly 150 Hindu temples desecrated* and destroyed in Sri Lanka during the regime of President Jayawardene.

In its publication, *Plight of Hindus in Lanka* the PROTEG said several curbs had been placed on the conduct of daily offerings and annual festivals in Hindu temples.

In recent years, many temples had been burnt down, decorated chariots set on fire, several Hindu priests burnt to death and expensive and rare idols stolen.

External Affairs Minister Bali Ram Bhagat said Sri Lanka must desist from seeking a military solution to the ethnic crisis on the island and that it could count on India's help in seeking a political settlement.

Tamils in Sri Lanka "must attain their aspirations and their legitimate demands must be met," he said, while winding up the two-day debate on the demand for grants to his Ministry in the lower house of parliament (Lok Sabha).

"They (Sri Lanka) are more and more isolated and at the same time another wrong policy is being pursued by it to induct the most hated Israeli Mossad mercenaries and reportedly mercenaries from South Africa".

Mr. Bhagat also defended the Government's stand in the Ministry's Annual Report that there was a military nexus between Sri Lanka and Pakistan.

Mr. Bhagat said the Sri Lankan government should talk to its own people and settle the problem. "You can't suppress and annihilate the Tamils".

Responding to the opposition's criticism of his observation that relations between Sri Lanka and India were good, Mr. Bhagat said if relations had not been good Sri Lanka would not have asked India to use its good offices to solve the ethnic problem. He urged restraint and patience when told by a member from South India that there would be no Tamils by the time a solution was found.

Ramalingaswamy made FRS

PROF. V. RAMALINGASWAMI, Director General of the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has been made Fellow of the Royal Society of London.

Currently, Chairman of the Global Advisory Committee on Medical Research of the World Health Organisation, Dr. Ramalingaswami is already a Foreign Associate of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States, and a Foreign Member of the USSR Academy of Sciences.

Prof. Ramalingaswamy, 64, is the second Indian medical scientist to receive the FRS after Dr. A.S. Paintal, Director of the Patel Chest Institute in Delhi.

A world authority on the pathology of nutritional disorders, two decades of his basic work on experimental protein malnutrition along with his colleague Dr. M.G. Deo, have led to a better understanding of malnutrition affecting millions in the Third World.

● **Prof. E.C.G. Sudarshan, Director of the Institute of Mathematical Sciences, Madras, has been awarded the 1985 Physics Prize by the Third World Academy of Sciences, which has its headquarters at the International Centre for Theoretical Physics in Trieste, Italy, in recognition of Prof. Sudarshan's fundamental contribution to the understanding of the weak nuclear force and particularly for his part in the formulation of the "Universal Val" theory.**

Continued on page 15

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OVERLOADED SWISS ARK

***The citizens of Switzerland are in confusion: their tradition of offering political asylum on Swiss soil has gone sour. What was a trickle of communist refugees has become a tide of Third World political immigrants. The Swiss burghers are becoming bad neighbours. Report from* Philip Jackson.**

TO COME across picnickers in the mid-winter snow beside the motorway south of Stuttgart is somewhat unusual; it is more surprising still to discover, shivering inside hooded parkas, a dozen Tamils from Sri Lanka. Very nervous young men, as well they might be; they are on the last leg of a daunting journey that began half a world away. When night falls, escorts will lead them to one of the illegal crossing points on the heavily wooded border with Switzerland further along the road. The moment the group sets foot on Swiss soil, they will be entitled by law to present themselves to the authorities and merely by uttering, even on a scrap of paper, the world "asylum", to remain in the country until their requests have been formally considered.

As these edgy Tamils are well aware, that should guarantee them a lengthy stay. The queue they are intent on joining grows longer every month as Turks, Chileans, Iranians and Iraqis, Africans (mostly from Zaïre) and a stream of other Sri Lankans find their way over Switzerland's "green" frontiers. The waiting list has already topped 23,000 and the delay in cases coming up for hearing can be up to five years. Plenty of time, in short, to look for a job, find a home, put down some roots that might help their application. Meanwhile, like most of the refugees before them, they can look forward to receiving regular financial support from the state, plus welfare services.

These are circumstances, it is fair to observe, which do not delight the average Swiss taxpayer, who tends to appreciate the value of a franc. Back in the Seventies, when applications for asylum rarely topped 1000 a year and came mainly from East Europeans fleeing from communist regimes, there was a certain pride in Switzerland's role as a haven for the politically oppressed (many thousands of Hungarians and Czechs were welcomed after the arrival of the Red Army in their countries). Since then the Swiss have become increasingly aware of – and uneasy about – the rapid growth of their foreign community. The last time anyone counted it numbered not far short of one million people, excluding seasonal workers, the staff of international organisations, and so on. That represents almost 16 per cent of the population. In all of Europe only Luxembourg, with its Common Market offices and financial exiles, supports a greater proportion of outsiders. The equivalent figure for Britain is about a third of that.

Not long ago, a leaked report from the Swiss government revealed that the direct cost of supporting asylum-seekers was some £35 million a year and that the continued influx threatened to create grave social problems. There is already much grumbling about "false refugees" and "economic fugitives", drawn to Switzerland by nothing more than the lure of the good life. In this inward-looking, deeply conservative society, there is no great fund of sympathy for someone like the Kurdish refugee from Turkey who announced to officials: "By human rights I understand being able to sit in the sun all day and not being forced to work and that Switzerland is taking care of my livelihood."

Cold comfort indeed for the Tamils, who have provided a significant proportion of the new wave of arrivals and are, accordingly, very much in the sights of their reluctant hosts. Handicapped by language problems, troubled by the fierce winters, few have been able to find regular work, even within the large clandestine labour force of foreigners who take care of the dirty and ill-paid jobs the Swiss won't touch. Instead, you find young Tamil men in disconsolate groups around the big railway stations, eking out cigarettes and the occasional coffee to help pass long, empty days. One unexpected side-effect of this enforced inactivity has been a sudden improvement in the playing standards of the handful of cricket clubs for expatriates in Switzerland. The matting wickets, one gathers, are not unlike those back in Sri Lanka.

A good many of the Tamils now looking for a new life in Switzerland maintain that they would greatly have preferred to join the well established community in this country. It was common to find people who said they had been turned away from Britain following the Thatcher government's ruling that Sri Lankans who claimed to be refugees from the intercommunal violence need entry visas before they would be allowed in. Scared of returning home, they say, they had looked around for some other destination in Europe, thus lending some weight to the discreet complaints of the Swiss authorities that Britain and the other nations which have been clamping down on immigration (among them notably liberal Denmark) are merely redirecting the growing pool of Third World asylum-seekers toward their own easily penetrated borders. According to Tamils I met, it was not long before a well-organised "underground railroad" sprang up to meet the demand for access to Western Europe, with, needless to say, no questions asked.

For most, it begins with a flight from Colombo on the Soviet Aeroflot line, destination East Berlin via Moscow. On arrival there, obliging officials usher them to Checkpoint Charlie. Beyond the Wall, they are collected by professional refugee traffickers, invariably Europeans, for the scurry across West Germany and a final dash through the dark forests. It is an expensive business, with all payments strictly in hard currency (an obvious attraction for the communist authorities involved). Most Tamils headed for Basle and Berne before filing asylum requests, when the grapevine reported these cities were in cantons that looked after refugees more generously than most. In Basle, for example, the basic package, comprising subsistence, accommodation costs and spending money, works out at some £300 per head a month. In a country like Sri Lanka, per capita income £210 a year, that can be a powerful attraction – at least until new arrivals discover the huge difference in the cost of living.

But while black and brown faces are familiar enough (if not exactly popular) in cosmopolitan cities like Geneva and Zurich, elsewhere – in the German-speaking rural regions especially – there were plenty of Swiss who hardly knew of Sri Lanka's existence, let alone its bloody civil war that had brought the slight, dark strangers to their spick-and-span streets. "At first we must have seemed like aliens from outer space," recalls Kandiah, once a grammer school teacher in Jaffna. "Nobody was rude, there were no racial insults or anything, but you could see they were bewildered and wondering what on earth these weird black fellows were doing here." While we were talking, in a coffee bar beneath the *Hauptbahnhof* in Berne, a Swiss army reservist pretended to aim his automatic rifle at a group of Tamils, saying something that greatly amused his mates. There was an awkward pause, then the moment passed.

"Considering that most of us were smuggled into their country and live off their taxes, ordinary Swiss people are usually polite and helpful," says Kandiah. "What depresses me increasingly is the feeling that I'm always going to be an outsider here. You never feel that anyone in Switzerland wants to know why we have left our own country or what we hope for the future." For the purposes of the all-important asylum request, virtually every male Tamil claims some connection, potentially fatal had he not fled, with "the boys" – the Tamil guerrillas fighting against Sri Lankan government forces. The walls of their spartan lodgings, converted schools and army barracks, thoughtfully heated to the most demanding Swiss standards in winter, are plastered with guerrilla communiqués reporting great and unlikely victories. Some of them pose beneath garlanded portraits of fallen martyrs.

In the summer of 1984, the Swiss government decided the Tamils whose requests for asylum had been rejected must be sent back to Sri Lanka. Church and human rights groups throughout the country protested vehemently and an organisation was swiftly established to provide "safe houses" for those facing repatriation and recruit a network of sympathisers to move them around ahead of the police. This would, of course, have involved deliberately flouting the law of the land, not something lightly undertaken in a society in which, it has been said, anything not forbidden is compulsory. Evidently impressed, the authorities backed down the day before the first expulsions were to begin: it was provisionally agreed that Tamils would not be forced to leave until it was certain they would be in no danger on their return.

'Considering that most of us were smuggled into their country and live off their taxes, ordinary Swiss people are usually polite and helpful. What depresses me increasingly is the feeling that I'm always going to be an outsider here'

Rudolph Keller is president-elect of the unequivocally named National Campaign Against Foreign Infiltration of People and Homeland (the capital letters are clearly important). The Tamil decision was not at all to his liking, but he has high hopes of seeing the back of several hundred thousand Tamils, Turks, Zaïreans and the rest before too long. Keller is confident that "the true Swiss" are at last awakening to the menace of the immigrants. A pale, thin fellow of 30 with a vaguely reminiscent hank of hair falling across his forehead, neatly attired as becomes an insurance executive from Basle, he points gleefully to the considerable gains made by his party, known as Nationale Aktion, and its equally right-wing allies Vigilance in local elections in Berne, Geneva and Lausanne.

"Since our formation almost 25 years ago, we have always drawn most votes from Swiss alarmed at the foreigners among us, but today we have so many from totally alien cultures, so conspicuous on our streets, that we are gaining in strength every day." Although Nationale Aktion has only five MPs in the 20-seat federal parliament, Keller is convinced that Switzerland's tradition of legislation by referendum will enable it to achieve the cherished objective of reducing the immigrant

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community. A proposal to get rid of one third of them over the next 15 years has already received the 100,000 signatures needed for a referendum (a meatier version put forward unsuccessfully in the mid-Seventies sought to halve the immigrant population in a period of just five years). Keller expects the revised plan, "rather moderate we believe", to go before the nation by 1989 and is sure it will get the simple majority required to become law.

With great seriousness, Keller explained to me the significance of the party's motto, *Volk und Heimat*. "*Volk*, this is the true Swiss people and *Heimat*, that is how you would say, I think Homeland. For us, there is a sacred duty to defend the national way of life." Opponents of Nationale Aktion have accused it of blatant racism, of being obsessed with preserving Swiss purity against immigrants with dark skins. Quite incorrect, says the president-elect. "Actually we are against *all* harmful foreign influences in Switzerland, whether it is Arabian millionaires buying up property here or Turks selling drugs in the streets of Basle – yes, Basle, imagine this – or Swiss children in classes containing a majority of Asians who don't speak a word of German or French." It can only be a matter of time, one imagines, before the party discovers the recent World Health Organisation report revealing that Switzerland stands second only to Belgium in the incidence of Aids in Europe.

It is significant, says Keller, that his party attracts its most fervent support from the elderly, who see the Switzerland they grew up in changing rapidly for the worse, and the young, increasingly resentful of the strain that the large immigrant community imposes on scarce housing resources and the job market. True, other European governments might consider that with unemployment hovering at around 1 per cent and a habit of pruning the foreign workforce in times of strain, the Swiss economy is not exactly at death's door. In fact only a dozen years have passed since a grand total of three Swiss citizens were out of work, and they were so ashamed that they kept their names secret.

Towards the end of last year, a big Nationale Aktion rally in Zurich was energetically disrupted by angry demonstrators protesting against the party's anti-immigrant views. Blows were exchanged, a few noses were bloodied; nothing much by present-day standards, perhaps, but this sort of beer-hall crawling can still shock the Swiss, accustomed to a more placid school of political debate. And further clashes on this combustible issue seem unavoidable. There is growing determination among opponents of the extreme right to prevent any repeat of what one student involved in that Zurich punch-up calls "those shameful days of *la barque est pleine*".

That dismissive phrase – "the boat's full up" surfaced in Switzerland early in the second world war. It was used by powerful and influential figures in the political establishment to justify the return of Jews desperately seeking asylum to their fate in Nazi Germany. Only after stern pressure from Swiss churchmen and other concerned individuals were the authorities persuaded to adopt a more humanitarian policy. In the late Seventies, a book about this episode, and a subsequent film, took the same charged phrase as a title, causing a considerable stir within the country.

The resurgence of this theme of over-loaded boats, heard increasingly in editorials of newspapers and speeches of politicans not normally associated with the far right, dismays Swiss human rights workers and church organisations. "My parents' generation often blame themselves for cold-shouldering the Jews during the last war," one young speaker told a Lausanne symposium on the right of asylum. "In another 10 or 20 years, are we also going to regret our reaction to those who now ask us to take them in?"

No way, retort the zealots of Nationale Aktion. To their gleeful, unconcealed satisfaction, the Swiss authorities have already braced themselves to take the tricky decision to expel some 60 African refugees, among them women and young children, to Zaïre as part of "Operation Black Autumn". Half had failed to leave the country after formally being refused asylum; others allegedly possessed phoney passports or had taken part in a rough-house with bodyguards of Zaïre's President Mobutu – himself the owner of a magnificent villa in Lausanne and, opponents claim, some exceptionally healthy Swiss bank accounts – on the occasion of his 80th birthday celebrations at one of Geneva's luxury hotels. A squad of 120 gendarmes was assigned to escort the deportees, some of whom had to be forced, handcuffed, into the Swissair DC10 taking them away.

Fearing a similar fate, another hundred Africans sought the protection of religious groups in Geneva, moving into makeshift dormitories guarded around the clock by local sympathisers. Over in Zurich, a few dozen Chilean asylum-seekers threatened with deportation took refuge in a church – like the German Jews before them. The Tamil refugee community fears that its turn must come eventually. Yet from around the world, people of all colours, creeds and cultures are still trekking doggedly towards the borders of Switzerland, pinning their hopes on securing that vital first foothold, legally or otherwise.

Courtesy: The Sunday Times Magazine (March 23)

TAMIL REFUGEES IN WEST GERMANY

The Tamils fleeing from the guns of the Sri Lankan Army have now entered West Germany, where they are seeking political asylum. HARISH MEHTA reports on the new Tamil refugee problem that threatens the Government of West Germany.

THOUSANDS OF SRI LANKAN TAMILS HAVE escaped from President Jayawardene's pogrom and have arrived in West Germany in search of political asylum. The Tamils are presently living in half a dozen refugee camps in Lower Saxony, Hesse and Bavaria, the three West German districts that lie close to the East German border.

The Tamils arrived in West Germany last year but have continued to pour into the country in dribs and drabs since the January 1986 clashes in Sri Lanka. East Germany, in collusion with some socialist States, facilitated the movement of the Tamils to West Germany. Says Dr. Hans Albrecht Schwarz-Liebermann, the Chairman of the Commission of the Christian Democratic Union for Foreign Affairs: "When the clashes began in Sri Lanka between the Army and the Tamils, the refugees escaped to East Germany. They had no proper papers but East Germany, instead of sending them back, allowed them to stay in Berlin and then pushed them into West Germany."

Dr. Liebermann feels that East German secret agents operating in Sri Lanka promised the Tamils that they would give them sanctuary in Germany and once the Tamils arrived at East Germany's *Schoenefeld* Airport in Berlin, the secret agents pushed them across the border into West Germany. "If East German agents can exist in Cuba and Mozambique, why not in Sri Lanka?" he asks.

Said the German Minister of Economics, Dr. Martin Bangemann: "We will continue to give refuge to the Tamils, who number over 10,000, in Germany. But that does not mean we will use economic sanctions against Sri Lanka." He added that although the Tamils were exerting considerable pressure on the West German economy, his country "was not complaining about the burden of the refugees".

The Tamils are living in refugee camps in concrete shelters which were used after World War II to accommodate the Germans who had fled Poland, Rumania and East Germany. Reveals Dr. Liebermann: "There have been cases when hundreds of Tamils have arrived in a single day and we've had to put them up either in solid establishments or in tents. In the settlements, the Tamil refugees are being given good food to keep them properly nourished as well as pocket money."

Currently, the cases of these Tamil refugees are being considered in West German courts that will decide whether political asylum will be granted to them. When the courts identify the true and genuine asylum seekers after the Tamils are thoroughly interrogated, only then will the Tamils be granted social security and later also be helped in finding jobs.

While the Bonn Government has filed several official protests with East Germany for thrusting the Tamils at them, the West German Government's position on the Tamil question is that it would assume responsibility for all those Tamils who can prove that their life and limb are in danger in Sri Lanka.

Meanwhile, violence returned to Sri Lanka on January 30, 1986 with a devastating attack launched by Prabhakaran's Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) on the island's Armed Forces in which 16 soldiers were killed. The Tamil militants foiled a joint air and land attack on Sri Lanka's Tamil population, claimed the LTTE.

On the same day, the Sri Lankan President, J.R. Jayawardene, levelled serious allegations of complicity against the Indian Government. He said: "The Indian Government and the Government of Tamil Nadu are giving illegal refuge to the leaders of the terrorists of Sri Lanka, to still run training camps."

Jayawardene's peace rhetoric has ended. Back in July 1985, in an interview with GENTLEMAN, Jayawardene spoke loftily, even sincerely, about truce in Sri Lanka and went so far as to state that he would "even talk to terrorists". At that time Jayawardene said that he was very satisfied with the Indian Government's stand that did not envisage a separate State for the Tamils.

On the credit side, however, the Sri Lanka Government's grant of citizenship rights to 94,000 Tamil plantation workers was welcomed by India. But these flash-in-the-pan overtures paled into insignificance when Jayawardene himself stated that he campaigned for "winning" the war against Tamil militants, despite India's frequent appeals that a military solution to the ethnic problem was not possible.

The Indian Government's main bones of contention are: the military assistance given to Sri Lanka by Israel and the US; the Voice Of America's broadcast station in Chilaw, Sri Lanka; the presence of the US naval task force – all of which are prickly thorns that further torment a solution. In the thick of these covert activities, Jayawardene's attitude can hardly be called contrite. *Courtesy: Gentleman, March 1986*

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SRI LANKA PROTESTS TO INDIA

THE GOVERNMENT, concerned with the tone and content of recent remarks about Sri Lanka by Mr. B.R. Bhagat, the Indian External Affairs Minister, in parliament, officially responded through a statement delivered to the Indian Government by Sri Lanka's High Commissioner in New Delhi on March 1.

The full text of the statement is as follows:

1. The Government has taken serious note of recent unfriendly Indian Government statements concerning Sri Lanka. In particular, the Government has learnt with surprise and deep disappointment of certain remarks of the External Affairs Minister of India, made in the course of proceedings in the Indian Parliament touching on our present situation.

2. There has been an allegation of genocide in connection with recent incidents here. The government notes with regret that, whilst the Indian Government has seen fit to use the term genocide in connection with the alleged killing of Tamil persons, it has not made any comment about the known recent killings of several Sinhalese and Muslim persons, including women and children, by terrorists. It may be that the Indian Government statement in this connection was constrained by the imperatives of parochial politics in India.

3. There has also been mention of the imposition by India of a time frame for the completion of certain actions by our government. It is of course, the case that, as the Indian Government has itself repeatedly emphasised, its good offices were offered in the context of facilitating the discharge of the Sri Lankan Government's exclusive responsibility for the resolution of an internal Sri Lankan problem. And the Government working within the framework of democratic polity has to proceed in its attempts at resolving current problems on the basis of consensual acceptance of such resolution by the entire polity here.

Moreover, a time frame cannot be conceived of unless such time frame is also applied to the interdiction and removal of Indian based terrorists against Sri Lanka. A time frame imposed on one party alone is no time frame at all but is an indiction of bias in approaching the matter.

4. There has also been an allegation that a committee of inquiry set up by Government following a recent incident in the Lahugala area represented an attempted "white-wash". The government of India is, of course, aware that, as in other such instances, a police investigation had already been initiated in this case too.

The committee of inquiry under reference is additional thereto, and was established out of a sense of deference to those civil groups here and others who had made representation in the matter. From the evidence already available to the investigations, it would appear that the Indian External Affairs Minister has rushed in where others would have feared to tread.

5. The Government appreciates that the Indian Government has itself to take note of sentiments expressed in the Indian Parliament by representatives who reflect particular parochial and partisan interests there. However, the properties of good and correct bilateral relations cannot be diluted, far less vitiated, by pandering thereto.

6. It is well known that the Government is vigorously engaged, as indeed it is its inescapable duty and obligation to do, in seeking to combat and overcome an armed terrorist challenge to its authority and to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country.

It is equally well known that such terrorist challenge stems from a movement which has logistical training and operational base facilities, propagandist mechanisms and a sanctuary in the territory of the state of Tamil Nadu in India.

The Government has made repeated, detailed and specific representations to the Indian Government since 1983 in that regard, and has repeatedly, in official bilateral exchanges at various levels, proposed specific and precise administrative and other procedures to overcome the problem.

It is with deep regret that the government must re-state that up to now it has had no positive response in that regard from the Government of India. To that extent, the value of the proferred good offices of the Indian Government stands impaired and its credibility diluted.

7. It is of course true, deeply regrettable though it is, that in the discharge of the Government's inescapable duty to combat and overcome the aforementioned challenge to its authority and to the integrity of the country, a measure of hardship even involving loss of civilian life and damage to civilian property must inevitably accrue. The problem, however, stems from an initial terrorist challenge fostered from Indian territory.

8. It would seem that the Indian Government propose to raise matters here before the Human Rights Commission at its current sittings in Geneva.

The violation of human rights transcends boundaries and has occurred in innumerable situations and places. No more fitting comment could apply here than 'physician, heal thyself'.

9. The Indian Government has urged that Sri Lankan refugees now in India be enabled to return in safety and honour. These refugees are now in India not because their return is impaired by any actions of the Sri Lanka Government but because of the continuing incidence of India based terrorism in the areas from which they have fled.

As is well known, large numbers both of Sri Lankan Tamils as well as of Indian passport holders continue to live in other parts of the Island, amongst Sinhalese, Muslims and other communities, in safety and honour. In fact, many of the Indian passport holders are even now overstaying beyond the period of their visas.

10. It is equally well known that the Government stands committed to the political resolution of prevailing differences within the country, principally affecting the minority Tamil community. In that connection, the Government notes with considerable disappointment the evident bias in the Indian Government's recent statements under reference, which recognise only the so-called grievances and aspirations of the minority Tamil community, but not the aspirations, or indeed the fears the concerns both of the majority Sinhalese community or of the other significant minority Muslim community in the Island.

There are, of course, yet further minority communities whose wishes and views must also necessarily be taken into account by any duly constituted government of the country in this connection.

11. The position in regard to the framework for a political settlement has also been clearly and repeatedly enunciated by the Government, namely, that devolution of power and other constitutional or administrative arrangements must not vitiate the essential unitary character of the Sri Lankan state or of its constituion.

12. The Government continues to look to the cooperation and assistance both of the Indian Government as well as all other friendly governments, in overcoming the twin problems currently affecting our country, namely, the defeat of the armed terrorists challenge to the state and to its duly constituted government on the one hand, and the harmonising of the aspirations, and indeed the fears and concerns of all sections of the Sri Lankan people, on the other.

Courtesy: Times of India

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India Accuses Sri Lanka Of Camouflaging Its Real Intentions

IN ANGRY response to Sri Lanka's diplomatic note of March 1, India has accused the Sri Lankan government of attempting to find an alibi for its failure to engage in constructive negotiations. India's reply, which was delivered to the Sri Lankan High Commissioner in New Delhi, who was summoned to the Foreign Office on March 6, observed that the Sri Lankan note made baseless and tendentious allegations using intemperate language including personal aspersions on the External Affairs Minister, Mr. B.R. Bhagat. It also referred to the totally unnecessary and callous killing of civilians and destruction of property.

The following is the full text of the Indian Government's reply.

The Government of India has taken note of the statement of the Government of Sri Lanka conveyed through its note of 1st March 1986. Baseless and tendentious allegations have been made in this note, and intemperate language used, including personal aspersions on the Foreign Minister of India. Government of India are both dismayed and regret the content and tenor of the note. It can hardly be conducive to overcoming the ethnic crisis in Sri Lanka.

The Government of India has traditionally had close and cordial ties with Sri Lanka. It is in view of this close relationship that the Government of India has been exerting itself tirelessly to assist in bringing about a political solution to Sri Lanka's ethnic problem. It was through Indian efforts that a dialogue between the representatives of Sri Lanka and the Sri Lankan Tamil groups was initiated. Most unfortunately, this process has not made any headway and indeed suffered a setback due to the continuing violence in Sri Lanka and the totally unnecessary and callous killing of civilians and destruction of property. In view of these accusations against India and particularly the content of the aforementioned note, it appears to the Government of India that there is an attempt to find an alibi for the failure to engage in constructive negotiations.

The military actions of the Government of Sri Lanka and repeated statements by the leadership of the country in regard to seeking a military solution, suggest that the assertion of Sri Lankan Government that it seeks the cooperation and assistance of the Indian Government in resolving the crisis which besets them, can only be regarded as an exercise to camouflage its real motivations.

The Government of India have extended its good offices to Sri Lanka to help resolve the crisis since 1983. It stands committed to this policy.

The Government of India reiterate that it is committed to assist in the resolution of the crisis through a settlement which would enable the minority communities in Sri Lanka to obtain their legitimate aspirations, through an appropriate political framework which keeps intact the unity and territorial integrity of Sri Lanka.

The Government of India regret that the Sri Lankan Government, in its note, has chosen to criticise and doubt the motives and compulsions of the Government of India. It is well known that more than 125,000 Sri Lankan nationals, who have been compelled to flee their homes out of terror at the repeated indiscriminate and brutal actions of the Sri Lankan security forces, have had to take refuge on India's soil. Despite the continuing influx of refugees, which has thrown a heavy burden on India, the Government of India have acted with restraint and attempted to maintain the traditional cordiality and cooperation in bilateral relations. The tone and contents of the Sri Lankan Government's note of March 1 do not reflect any reciprocation of this attempt.

Instead of indulging in polemics of the type contained in its note of March 1, the Government of Sri Lanka should take note of the continuing endeavours of India to ensure that despite many obstacles in the way, all parties concerned adhere to the path of seeking a negotiated settlement without further delay and loss of life.

If the Government of Sri Lanka persists in its present attitudes and policies, it would only mean the prolongation of the agony and a deepening of the tragedy faced by Sri Lanka and its people.

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Mr. M.J. Melchior LL.B., B.Phil.
(formerly Barrister-at-Law)

has resumed his legal practice full time and will concentrate on Litigation & Immigration Problems.

Conveyancing by Sri Shanmuganathan, Solicitor, and his team.

News From India Continued

From page 11

Dinesh Singh for firmness on Sri Lanka

INDIA'S FORMER External Affairs Minister Dinesh Singh has favoured the Indian Government's adopting a 'more firm' attitude towards Sri Lanka.

Speaking in the Lower House of Parliament, Mr. Singh, who is a Congress-I member, said the genocide in Sri Lanka was a matter of deep regret and concern to India.

The Government of India, he said, had gone to the farthest lengths to try to assist that country to find a solution to the ethnic problem. But the Sri Lanka Government had made use of the time thus gained to find a military solution.

Mr. Singh said India should take a firm stand for finding a political solution, and not a military solution, to the ethnic problem there.

He said it was a matter of concern that the Sri Lanka Government had used the army, navy and the air force to kill its own people.

"Growing Military Nexus" in Sri Lanka

INDIA HAS voiced serious concern over the involvement of foreign security organisations in Sri Lanka and spoke in particular of "the growing military nexus" between Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

In its annual report for 1985–86, the External Affairs Ministry said, "the Government of India are seriously concerned at the activities of foreign security and intelligence organisations in Sri Lanka".

The ministry took note of reports of Israeli intelligence organisations and British security experts being involved with the Sri Lankan security forces.

"The growing military nexus between Pakistan and Sri Lanka, following Mr. Jayawardene's visit to Pakistan in April 1985 and the visit of the President of Pakistan to Sri Lanka in December 1985 is being viewed with some concern," it said.

The report, while mentioning "involvement" of Israeli and British security experts with Sri Lankan security forces, did not give any details.

Sri Lankan Pak-made bomb shown in Madras

SRI LANKAN Tamil militants took journalists by surprise when they displayed a 55 KG unexploded bomb at a press conference in Madras earlier this week.

The nearly five-feet-high bomb, they said, was one of the 300 bombs dropped by Sri Lankan security forces from fighter-planes in Jaffna, in the island's north, during three days from February 19 to 21. The liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) guerillas defused it after it failed to explode.

The LTTE spokesman Dr. A.S. Balasingam said the bomb, which they had brought to India by boat, was of Pakistani origin. A new Pakistan-Sri Lanka military axis was emerging to help the Island government in its attempt to wipe out the Tamils, he added.

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Around The World . . .

SWEDEN

Swedish Aid to Sri Lanka is Restricted

SIDA (Swedish International Development Authority) regards the internal situation in Sri Lanka as serious and has decided to shelve its aid program.

In an article in Dagens Nyheter of 13 March Thomas Bibin raises the question of continued aid to Sri Lanka. "Can we continue to give increasing aid on the receiver's terms to a country in which a repeatedly professed democracy is no longer extended to the largest minority – the Tamils?" – he enquires. Mr. Bibin gives his view of the serious ethnic conflict between the Sinhalese majority and the Tamil minority in the country, but does not advocate a suspension of all aid to Sri Lanka. He considers that we can quite well give a bit more than crumbs to the poorest in Sri Lanka of today, i.e. to displaced persons and to the still "stateless" estate Tamils as well as to destitute women.

During the next few days SIDA will be drafting a fresh aid agreement with Sri Lanka for the next two financial years. During this period Sweden's commitments to the great hydro-electric scheme at Kotmale will be finalised. This implies that the aid conditions cover the next two years. Kotmale will be paid off with 150 and 103 million Skr. respectively. For the other projects, primarily rural development and education, there remains to be paid another 20 million Swedish Crowns per year. **The assistance to Sri Lanka will therefore not increase as Mr. Bibin appears to imply, but will diminish according to a preconceived plan.**

Mr. Bibin presents a simplified version of the ethnic conflict, but the fact remains that it is very serious and that there is no solution to the problem in sight. This situation has caused SIDA to limit its planned aid to Sri Lanka after Kotmale project terminates i.e. July 1, 1988. We are recommending an increased drive in rural development and in education while plans for support in other spheres will be deferred. With these aims in regard to the aid program we will be supporting those sections for which Mr. Bibin is pleading.

BÖRJE LJUNGGREN
Departmental Chief, SIDA

CHINA

China has declined Colombo's request for military assistance to combat Tamil militants. According to UNI, Sri Lanka made this request when Chinese President Li Xinniang visited Colombo recently. Xinniang is reported to have impressed upon the Sri Lankan Government that any military assistance to Sri Lanka would undermine efforts to find a solution to the ethnic problem in the Island. He also lauded India's offer of good offices to bring the two sides together. He said induction of more arms by Government would aggravate the problem and would delay a solution to conflict.

CANADA

350 Montreal Tamils March

"Montreal's Tamil community may not be very large, but today it was loud. The demonstrators began their march at Place Victoria. They made their way along Dorchester to the C.B.C. Building. They are unhappy with conditions in their homeland. In Sri Lanka there are about 3½ million Tamils. They are a minority, and representatives of the community here say that the Tamils in Sri Lanka are being persecuted."

Mr. S. Sabanadesan, President of the Eelam Tamil Association of Quebec, was interviewed at this stage. He said, "The army is killing innocent Tamils because the Tamils are struggling for their right to live as a minority with equal rights with the Sinhalese majority over there. So the army is going around arresting young people and killing them, taking others into detention camps and torturing them. Naturally, the people are resisting the army occupation, and just because they are resisting, they go on killing innocent Tamils."

The commentator concluded with these words, "The Tamil community here is trying to put pressure on the Canadian Government. They want Canada to cut off foreign aid to Sri Lanka, and they want Canada to bring up the issue at the United Nations."

Canadian Broadcasting Corporation report of March 22

AUSTRALIA

The Australian Central Territory (ACT) Branch Council of the ruling Australian Labour Party (ALP) has unanimously adopted a resolution condemning the genocide taking place in Ceylon, expressing concern over the continued grant of aid to Ceylon by Australia and calling for a boycott of all Ceylon goods, such as tea. The Resolution passed by the ACT Branch Council of ALP is reproduced below:

The ACT Branch Council of the ALP condemns the genocide taking place in Sri Lanka, where the right wing government of President Jayawardene has established a dictatorship by expelling the parliamentary opposition, and is using the Army to murder the minority Tamil population.

We express concern that Australia continues to be a major trading partner and supplier of foreign aid to this genocidal regime, despite the refusal of the Sri Lankan Government to allow the Australian Foreign Minister, Bill Hayden, to visit any Tamil reigons on his recent visit.

This Branch Council calls for a boycott of Sri Lankan goods (such as tea), and urges trade unions to support this, and the Federal Labour Government and ALP National Executive to urgently consider means of opposing this brutal repression and of supporting the struggle of Sri Lankan Tamils for civil liberties and self-determination.

NETHERLANDS

Declaration on Sri Lanka

On 25 February 1986 in the Hague, Netherlands, the Foreign Ministers of the 12 EC countries adopted the following declaration in the framework of political cooperation:

"The Twelve are following developments in Sri Lanka closely and wish to express their regret that the intensive efforts to bring about a reconciliation have unfortunately not yet been successful.

They appeal to all parties concerned to continue their dialogue in order to achieve a political solution, in the interests of peace and reconciliation within the framework of a united Sri Lanka.

The Twelve value the fact that, with the agreement of the parties involved, India is supporting the search for a political solution."

NEWS IN BRIEF

***Nirmalini Bartlett** has been successful at the recent M.R.C.P. (London) examination. She is an old girl of Ladies College, Colombo and graduated in 1983 from the University of Liverpool. She is a daughter of Dr. and Mrs. A.N. Bartlett of 9, Kinross Avenue, Colombo 4 and presently of London.*

Co-Vice Principals for Jaffna College

The Board of Directors of Jaffna College has appointed Messrs. W.D. Kulathungam and S. Jebanesan as Co-Vice Principals to succeed the retiring Vice-Principal, Mr. A. Rajasingam. They will assume duties when Mr. Rajasingam retires in May this year.

New Director for the Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society

Mr. W.N.S. Samuel, former Principal of Hartley College, has been appointed Director, C.I.S.R.S., Maruthanamadam, Chunnakam.

MASSACRE BY HOME GUARDS

Six Tamils, including an infant, were stabbed, cut and chopped to death at Selvanayagapuram in Trincomalee by Home Guards, on 6th March.

The sole escapee, Murugaiah Santhakumar (24) was admitted to the Trinco General Hospital.

The bodies of Murugaiah Thavamani (42) and Rajan (19) were identified at the time of going to press.

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BOOK REVIEWS

THE SCIENCE OF BHARATANATYAM
Saroja Vaidyanathan CC 11/61 Bapa Nagar, Dr. Zakir Hussain, Marg, New Delhi 110003
1984 Rs 125 80pp. 21.2 × 27.0 cm. Hardcover

BHARATANATYAM – THE TAMIL LANGUAGE *Lakshmi Viswanathan Sri Kala Chakra Trust, 74 Kalakshetra Colony, Madras 600090*
1984 Rs 90 104pp. 27.4 × 21.2 cm. Glossy card cover

A DANCER ON DANCE *V.P. Dhananjayan Bharatakalanjali, 8 Jeevaratnam Nagar, Adyar, Madras 600020*
1984 Rs 50 78pp. 21.2 × 21.6cm. Card cover

The traditional teachers of Bharatanatyam regarded questions as both impertinent and irrelevant. The student's duty was only to absorb what the guru decided to offer. In the last twenty years or so a more inquiring and intellectual attitude has emerged, as the dance has moved out of the preserve of the traditional Pillai families. The new students asked questions, found some answers, and having become teachers themselves are eager to provide a theoretical framework for the art. Three internationally-known Bharatanatyam dancers, who also teach, have published books recently. The herald of this trend was Mrinalini Sarabhai (**Understanding Bharatanatyam,** Darpana, Ahmedabad, 1981, Rs50, but out of print, it seems).

Mrinalini's book gives a good, thorough coverage of Bharatanatyam theory and practice; and if you want a single exposition at any price, Dr Sunil Kothari's **Bharatanatyam,** Marg, 1979, Rs250, is the one to have. But the three reviewed here are complementary and will appeal to different readers, whether or not they have an Indian background.

The title of Saroja Vaidyanathan's book is very reasonable for every aspect of Natya, Indian dance and drama, has been analysed and codified by ancient writers. There are short but useful sections on the nine rasas, or emotions, on the musical instruments used, on rhythm and on the arangetram (maiden performance). A reader not acquainted with Carnatic music may have to put a little effort into the chapter on talam, rhythm. Perhaps it would have been more useful if the talas actually used in dance – rupakam, adi, misra chapu – were exemplified, with some explanation of how they relate to the steps used in korvais and teermanams.

There are no less than 59 photographs on the costumes and jewellery; a pity though that none are in colour. Throughout, the illustrations are copious; fine line drawings not only of the foot positions and of the single and double hand gestures – these are available in other publications – but, uniquely, of the head, neck and eye movements. With each gesture is printed the relevant quotation (in Sanskrit) from Nandikeswara's **Abhinaya Darpanam,** but what is useful is that Saroja gives the current interpretation. For example, the **Abhinaya Darpanam** gives the use of the Alokita Drishti, open glance, as denoting the potter's wheel, indicating objects, and begging. Saroja, tells us it is used for expressing wonder, surprise or admiration.

The young Bharatanatyam dancer, practising or prospective, will find the book an invaluable introduction to the theory and practice of the art. Indeed, there is no alternative. Their parents too might be grateful for a not-too-detailed survey of what a course in Bharatanatyam entails. A useful book for the school library; though adults seriously interested will find Dr. Kothari worth the extra cost, and Mrinalini more informative and cheaper. The book is well printed on glossy paper. The glossary and index are successfully combined.

The title of Lakshmi Viswanathan's book indicates a recent approach to the art. It is usual to show how the current form of Bharatanatyam relates to other Indian dances and how all can be traced to the principles enshrined in ancient texts, particularly the Natya Sastra. Without denying these connections, Lakshmi views Bharatanatyam as an essentially Tamil product and relates the forms of dance in Tamil country to its architecture, sculpture and literature. Our appreciation of Indian religion, history and art tends to be dominated by the northern Sanskritic viewpoint and this book provides a useful corrective in presenting Bharatanatyam as a Dravidian, especially Tamil, art. It is a valuable addition to the literature on Indian dance. Those not deeply interested in Indian art or dance, though, may find the historical detail a little daunting.

The book is beautifully produced and illustrated, with many marginal and full page black and white photographs and several superb colour plates. The pictures are of paintings, bronzes, sculptures and buildings of Tamil Nadu, and though not all are illustrative of the text, they are very atmospheric. The book concludes with some of Lakshmi's personal experience of presenting Bharatanatyam. There is no glossary or index, and not all the Tamil terms are explained in the text.

Dhananjayan is probably the foremost male dancer of Bharatanatyam. Though his book appears to be just a collection of his thoughts on dance, it is a remarkably good introduction for the layman. He covers many of the essential concepts, such as rasa and bhava. He gives his views on the state of the art today, and has a question and answer section covering many points a Westerner might want to ask. There is a chapter on Kathakali, of which Dhananjayan is also an exponent, and one comparing that style with Bharatanatyam. Apart from his analysis of the nine rasas he does not go much into technical detail; but he gives one a very good feel for the spirit of Bharatanatyam and for its contemporary concerns. In contrast to Lakshmi Viswanathan he states that Bharatanatyam 'cannot be claimed as a style particular to South Indian dance'.

Indian dancers, like artists anywhere, can be a prickly bunch, but Dhananjayan's humanity and generosity of spirit emerge clearly from these pages, though he hits hard at times – at the abuse of official patronage for instance. **A Dancer On Dance** should appeal to anyone interested in dance, whatever the variety. There are twelve pages of photographs, mainly collages of Dhananjayan, his wife, Shanta, and their school, four being in colour.

It is a pity that all the books, otherwise well produced, should contain a number of printing errors; though I know Indian gremlins can outwit even the most meticulous proof reader.

5 Nadir Court, Blake Hall Road, London E11 **John Palim**

Mr. S. Balakrishnan, B.D.S.

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ACADEMIC TRAILS

Karan Thapar *has published a piece on "Taming the Tamil Tigers: Sri Lanka's last chance to avoid the slide to civil war" in the conservative weekly* ***The Spectator*** *of 22 February, 1986. There is an interesting account of a conversation with Lalith Athulathmudali.*

James Manor's *long awaited book on the life of S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike will in all probability be published this year.*

Yasmine Gooneratne's *(a professor of English Literature at Macquarrie University, Australia)* ***Relative Merits,*** *a book which contains snippets on some of the leading figures in the Bandaranaike family will be published this summer by Christopher Hurst and Company, London. Gooneratne is the daughter of Sammie Dias Bandaranaike, cousin of S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike.*

Rajiva Wijesinha's ***Acts of Faith*** *was published by Navrang, New Delhi in 1985. A fable, its central hero is his maternal uncle, the late Right Reverend Lakshman Wickremasinghe. It is highly critical of the present political order in Sri Lanka.*

Bruce Mathews' *(of Acadia University, Canada) article on radicalisation of politics in the Tamil areas and the escalation of violence there will appear in the April/May issue of* ***Pacific Affairs.***

Professor Edward R. Appathurai's *(of York University, Canada) "Communal Politics and National Integration in Sri Lanka" was published in Milton Israel's (editor), National Unity:* ***The South Asian Experience*** *(New Delhi, Promilla and Company, 1983).*

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LETTERS

Jayawardene's "Democracy"!

MICHAEL HAMLYN reported in The Times of 15th March President Jayawardene's declaration that he was doing his "best to preserve the democratic system" in Sri Lanka. It was presumably in furtherance of his efforts to do so that President Jayawardene obtained undated letters of resignation from his Members of Parliament and postponed the general elections that were due in 1983 by resort to a referendum about which Patricia Hyndman of the prestigious Lawasia Human Rights Standing Committee commented in March 1985: "The referendum to extend the life of the Parliament was held under strictures which severely hampered the opposition campaign. Some opposition politicians were detained under emergency regulations, some had been stripped of their civic rights, some opposition papers were banned and some opposition presses were sealed, while the poll itself was marred by the harassment of electoral officers, candidates and voters".

Again, it may be that it is in furtherance of his efforts to "preserve the democratic system" in Sri Lanka that President Jayawardene continues to have recourse to laws which moved Paul Sieghart, Chairman of the Executive Committee of Justice to say in April 1984: "No legislation conferring even remotely comparable powers is in force in any other free democracy operating under the rule of law, however troubled it may be by politically motivated violence. Indeed there is only one known precedent to impose restriction orders (under the Sri Lankan law) and that is the comparable legislation currently in force in South Africa . . . Such a provision is an ugly blot on the statute book of any civilised country".

And it may also be that President Jayawardene seeks to secure democracy in Sri Lanka by methods of persuasion which led Amnesty International to state in October 1985: "Allegations that torture occurs in Sri Lanka have long been of concern to AI. Over the past five years, however, the organisation has received consistent reports, many in the form of sworn affidavits, which lead it to conclude that the practice is widespread and persistent. Torture is used particularly against political detainees, some of whom have died as a result, and also against criminal suspects".

It may also be that it was his concern for democratic values that impelled him as an elected President to declare his views about a section of his electorate in a newspaper interview on 11th July 1983: "I am not worried about the opinion of the Tamil people now . . . Now we cannot think about them. Not about their lives or their opinion about us". And some of us may be forgiven for wondering whether democracy may well have come to die in Sri Lanka by the strenuous efforts that President Jayawardene has made on its behalf.

There remains, of course, the problem of the Tamils in Sri Lanka. But the ethnic conflict has also withstood President Jayawardene's "best efforts" to find a solution. It was a regrettable misfortune, that about two weeks after President Jayawardene's newspaper interview of 11th July 1983, an organised assault was launched on thousands of innocent Tamils living in Sinhala areas – an assault which led Paul Sieghart to comment: "Clearly this was not a spontaneous upsurge of communal hatred among the Sinhala people – nor was it, as has been suggested in some quarters, a popular response to the killing of 13 soldiers in an ambush by Tamil Tigers on the previous day, which was not even reported in the newspapers until after the riots began. It was a series of deliberate acts executed in accordance with a concerted plan, conceived and organised well in advance . . . But what I find most extraordinary is that to this day, there has been no attempt to find out the truth through an official, public and impartial inquiry, when the situation in the country cries out for nothing less".

And now, in another newspaper interview, in his concern to do "his best", President Jayawardene ruminates "thoughtfully" and almost sadly: "How to take Jaffna is a problem . . . It means the killing of innocent people". But then again, President Jayawardene may gain strength from his own words in 1957: "The time has come for the whole Sinhala race which has existed for 2,500 years, jealously safeguarding their language and religion, to fight without giving any quarter to save their birthright . . . I will lead the campaign".

Michael reports that the President seemed in a baffled mood. And that, perhaps, is not surprising. A genocidal attack does have certain baffling aspects – particularly in the international arena. And speaking to The Times does not resolve all of them.

T.V. Variar
Hanwell, London W7

THE VOICE OF A SINHALA INTELLECTUAL

The following letter was addressed to the Editor of the Jaffna-based SATURDAY REVIEW by Dr. Ediriwira Sarachchandra, and was published in the 15th February issue of the paper under the headline: "Don's Helplessness".

Dr. Ediriwira Sarachchandra was one-time Professor of Sinhala language and Literature at the University of Ceylon, Peradeniya. He is also well-known as a playwright and producer. He was Sri Lanka's ambassador in Paris. His play "Maname" has come to remain as a major landmark in the evolution of Sinhala Drama.

Reading your journal, the arrival of which I look forward to eagerly, has made me a sadder but a wiser man. It is the misfortune of the human being that, although Truth is an ultimate Good, knowledge of the truth does not always bring him happiness. Ignorance is, often, bliss. I wonder how many people in the South realise the extent of the sufferings that our brethren, the Tamil people of this country, have been undergoing for so long and are undergoing at the present moment. People to whom I have spoken do not believe what I say. Or they do not want to. Their senses are dulled by the sound of the tamashas around them, the scores of the cricket matches, the bailas broadcast by the State radio and the Nandana Vindana comedies on T.V. They will not realise anything until they are themselves touched by this Evil that is stalking the country.

But what I feel most difficult to cope with is a feeling of utter helplessness in the face of all this. My friend Dr. Sivathamby asked me to make an appeal. But to whom? And asking for what? Merely to say, "Stop this senseless killing" is not going to be of any avail. How many people, more important than I am, have said this? There must be some formula for peace, and this can be evolved in an atmosphere of sanity. There is, obviously, no sanity now. The Security Forces have lost their balance of mind. Fear of unknown death-traps like landmines and their own impotence before the unseen enemy have driven them to this state.

The psychology that has gripped them reminds us of the My-Lai incident in the Vietnam war where, in almost similar circumstances but on a larger scale, regular army units were fighting guerillas. Your journal reminds us of the incident, in May last year, in which a soldier going berserk, shot seven Tamil people dead. Now it is Kilinochchi, and you have adduced incontrovertible evidence to show that it is not fabricated: the testimony of a Tamil who was injured by the gun-shots, and of a Sinhalese who was an eye-witness.

I don't presume to be able to propose a solution. Either the militants must lay down their arms, as the President says, and he will withdraw the Security Forces, or the Security Forces must be withdrawn and the militants must agree to lay down their arms. Or, by agreement, these two events must take place simultaneously.

Of course, this is not easily done, as we saw from the fate of the Thimpu talks. While I write, the killing is taking place in the mid-country as well, and members of the Tamil community as well as Sinhalese are suffering, and the economy may be badly hit.

I am raising my feeble voice among thousands of others to say that the Sinhalese do not want this war. We want to live in peace and amity with the Tamils and all other communities. Therefore, let whoever has the power to stop this war, stop it.

Let him not waver, let him not procrastinate, let him take the bold step that is needed, and, in the end the forces of good and justice will be on his side.

Ediriwira Sarachchandra

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News From Sri Lanka

Government Spending in North and East

Secretaries of Ministries are now monitoring Government expenditure in the troubled areas of the North and East where **terrorist** activity has bitten deep into the civilian administration.

Authoritative official sources indicated that there has been extensive damage to the intrastructure of these areas, which has considerably retarded progress in both development and maintenance work.

The government has decided that each Ministry should examine whether money spent in these areas by departments and other agencies under its control is cost-effective.

Directions have gone out to all Secretaries of Ministries to examine whether the funds spent in the **terrorist** affected areas of the North and East "are being properly used for worthwhile purposes".

"We've been asked to send these reports in early", one secretary said. Inland Revenue Chief Hugh Moligoda said that tax collections in both the Jaffna and Batticaloa districts had dropped.

"I certainly can't go to Jaffna or Batticaloa. We're not very popular in those areas", he said.

Mass Signature Campaign

The Citizens' Committee in the north and east are busy collecting signatures protesting against the 1000 metre security zone around security camps. This signature campaign was inaugurated by Bishop D.J. Ambalavanar, Bishop S. Deogupillai, Kailasantha Kurukkal, Moulavi Sathahathulla, Emeritus University Lecturer K. Nesiah, Eela Nadu Editor N. Sabaratnam and Professor K. Sivathamby, Chairman of the Co-ordinating Committee of Citizens' Committees.

Kamban Tamil Kottam

"The message of Kamba Ramayana is that righteousness ultimately triumphs over evil".

Thus stated Vice Chancellor, Jaffna University Dr. S. Vithiyananthan in his presidential address at a simple ceremony held to lay the foundation stone for the "Kamban Tamil Kottam".

President of Kamban Kalagam Mr. E. Jeyaraj in his welcome address stated that facilities would be provided for a hall, a library of books on Kamban and for research on Kamba Ramayana.

Dr. S. Vithiyananthan continued that a greater part of the epic Kamba Ramayana took place in Sri Lanka. Sita was held a captive in this country. Rama brought his men from India, attacked the Lankan monarch and secured her release. Finally Rama won. Tamils can find solace in this message, he concluded.

Professor A. Sanmugathas, Dr. S. Monaguru, Mr. S. Sivalingarasa; Editor Uthayan Mr V.K. Kanamylnathan; Editor Eela Nadu Mr. N. Sabaratnam; Editor Amirtha Gangai Sembiyan Selvan, Mr. V.N. Sivaraja Registrar Jaffna Campus. Mr. V.K. Sivagnanam; Jaffna Municipal Commissioner also spoke.

Soviet Policy hits tea

The continued absence of the Soviet Union from Colombo's tea auctions has led to a decline in prices and raised concern in the trade. The Soviet Union withdrew from the auctions in December last year and has been inactive since, while pledging to buy half of India's exports in the coming year. . . BOP prices declined by two rupees per kilo and five rupees per kilo for the better grades late last month. Soviet buyers accounted for 12 million kilograms in 1984, nearly five per cent of Sri Lanka's sales. In 1985, the purchases dropped to 5.5 million kilograms, just over four per cent of the total, exports, according to tea trade statistics. The Soviet Union's Indian purchases, meanwhile have increased steadily and it was India's number one buyer last year. It has also pledged to buy 100 million kilograms from India in 1986 . . . (Sun – 10.3.86)

Eight dons quit

Eight senior academics of the Colombo University have submitted their resignations to Vice-Chancellor Professor Stanley Wijesundera compelling the authorities to postpone indefinitely the opening of the science faculty for the new year. The eight heads of department cited the failure of the authorities to grant their demands for a salary increase, as a reason for their resignations, top university sources said . . . (Sun – 5.3.86)

Repeal Thesawalami – M.P.

Sunil Ranjan Jayakody (UNP – Polgahawela) moving a private member's motion to repeal the Thesawalamai Law, said that this law was in contradiction to two articles of the Constitution of Sri Lanka. None of the previous governments changed this law which is contrary to two articles of the Constitution. The present UNP Government is nearly nine years old but this law is still in existence, he said. "The British made use of this law to divide the people. This law applies even if a resident of Jaffna has property either in Jaffna or outside it. This law violates the fundamental rights of the people. Today we cannot buy land in Jaffna let alone go to Jaffna, but they can buy land anywhere. This is unfair. This law is a caste division perpetrated by the British who ruled Ceylon" . . . (The Island – 8.3.86)

Priest back to Jail

Fr. Aparanam Singarayer, the Catholic priest who stood in the dock for 180 days in the High Court Colombo was yesterday acquitted of the charge of withholding information of the Police about the Neerveli bank robbery, that was brought against him. But the priest, happy and smiling, drove back to Welikada prison. He is already charged in an adjoining Court at Bauddhaloka Mawatha.

In that case, he is charged with harbouring terrorists and withholding information to the Police about the terrorist attack on the Chavakachcheri Police Station . . . Immediately on his acquittal Fr. Singarayer speaking to the press said: "The prevention of Terrorism Act should be repealed. We are freedom fighters. We do not want to see the bloodshed of our Sinhala brethren . . ." (The Island – 4.3.86)

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Ceylon Progressive Writers Front (Jaffna Branch)

Progressive Sinhala writers strongly protest against the oppression in Chile, Vietnam, Angola and in other countries.

But it is unfortunate that they remain dumb when atrocities are committed against the Tamils in their own country in the North.

Thus lamented Mr. Dominic Jeeva, Editor of Tamil monthly magazine "Mallikai" at a Seminar on "Contemporary Tamil Literature" held under the auspices of the Jaffna Branch of Ceylon Progressive Writers' Front. Mr. N. Somahanthan Presided.

Mr. Dominic Jeeva continued that it was encouraging that several creative Tamil writers have emerged from even among the most oppressed castes among the Tamil community in Sri Lanka, while it has not been so even in Tamil Nadu.

General secretary I. Santhan proposed the vote of thanks.

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WEDDINGS

The marriage of M. Kanagadevan (Bobby) to Raji Sabapathy (daughter of the late Mr. Sam Sabapathy and of Mrs. Sabapathy) was solemnized on March 22 at the Community Centre, Watford. Mr. Kanagadevan is the son of the late Mr. R. Mahadeva (former General Secretary of S.C.O.T.) and of Mrs. Kanagalakshmi Mahadeva, 69 Streatfield Road, Harrow, Middx.

The wedding of Mr. T. Pathmanathan and Miss Mangayatkarasi Sinnadurai took place on 29.3.86 at the Shree Ganapathy Temple, Wimbledon, London SW19. The bridegroom is a cousin of Mr. M.T. Manikkavasagan, Kenton, Harrow and the bride a sister of Mr. S. Navaratnarajah, Shirley Park, Croydon.

Deaths

CANAGASINGHAM, Mr. Pathman. The death occurred on February 8 of Pathman Canagasingham, Senior Superintendent of Police, Colombo, the youngest son of the late Mr. and Mrs. Carpenter Canagasingham of Dutch Road, Uduvil. He leaves behind his wife, Ananthie, four sons, a daughter, three brothers – Messrs. Chelliahpillai Canagasingam and P.J.C. Canagasingam, retired public servants (Co-operative Department), Mr. D.S.C. Canagasingham, Hospital Secretary, McLeod Hospital, Inuvil and a sister, Mrs. Balasingham Welch, presently in UK.

M.H. HARRISON, Dr. passed away on 20th February in his home in Auberndale, Mass., U.S.A. He taught at Jaffna College from 1919–1930. He married Minnie Hastings, a granddaughter of Dr. E.P. Hastings (former Principal of Jaffna College) and brother-in-law of Grover Cleveland, one time President of the U.S.A.

JEEVANAYAGAM. Death occurred in London of Glory Thiraviyam, wife of late Dr. A.V. Jeevanayagam, mother of Niranjala (London), and Ravi (London), 43, Gladstone Avenue, Manor Park, London E12 6NR.

MAHESAN, Mudaliyar V. Director, N. Vaitilingam & Co. Ltd. Cremation March 9. "Linga Vasa", Navaly, Manipay.

Rev. Dr. J.S. Mather, D.D.

Rev. Mather passed away peacefully on 21 March, in his 96th year. His eldest son was the late Dr. Jesuratnam Mather. Other children are Mrs. Thilagam Arulambalam (New Zealand), Dr. Albert Mather (UK), Mrs Poo Thambar, Selvan Mather, Raji Mather, A.K. Mather (Sri Lanka) and Rathini Mather (New Delhi). He entered the Methodist Ministry in 1914 becoming Chairman, North Ceylon Methodist Synod (1944–49) and President, All-Ceylon Methodist Conference (1954–59). He was also a Vice-Chairman of the World Methodist Conference.

RETNANANDAN, Dr. (Mrs) Pakkiam. The death occured on 8.2.86 of Dr. (Mrs) Pakkiam Retnanandan, formerly of the staff of McLeod Hospital, Inuvil. She ws 81 years old at the time of her death. She leaves behind her husband, Mr. J.K. Retnanandan, three sons, Anandaraj, Karunaraj and Selvarajah and a daughter, Mrs. Sotha Vethanayagam.

SINNATHAMBY, Dr. Retired Professor of Obstetrics and Gynaecology of University of Ceylon, husband of Leelawathie.

SIVAGNANARATNAM, Dr. C.K. (80). Retd S.H.S., Jaffna. Father of Dr. Padmini Kasinathan (S'pore), Dr. Nalaini Pasupathy (NZ), Sri Krishnaratnam (UK), Mrs. Muhunthini Sivapatham (SL), Sri Ramaratnam (USA). Funeral S'pore. April 4.

SUBRAMANIAM, Mrs.. Widow of S.K. Subramaniam. Mother of Jayahanthan (CTCC, Grenada), Jayatha (France) and Kamala. Died March 1. Point Pedro.

VETTYVELU, A., father of Ketheeswaranathan, Sivapottanathan (Executive Director, Allied Shipping Agencies Ltd.), Gurunathan (Canada), Ragunathan (Australia), Jeganathan (Denmark), Pathmanathan (UK), and Mrs. Chakravirithy. Funeral took place on 27th February at Kaluwanchikudy.

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Bombing and Shelling – *continued from page 1*

to fire at will with automatic weapons and mortars within these zones as and when the security forces deem it necessary. Since there are about 60 army camps in the two provinces, virtually every town is threatened. It is estimated that just over 100,000 civilians are covered by 11 army camps in the Jaffna peninsula alone and 250,000 more in the northern part of the mainland. In the Jaffna city, 52,000 fall within the shadow of the garrison in the Dutch-built fort. The one-kilometre zone embraces the general hospital, the bus station, municipal offices, bazaar, nine schools, 2120 shops and 2681 houses. "They are sitting ducks for mortar fire from inside the camp", commented 'The Hindu', the Indian English daily.

Diary Of Incidents

★ *16.3.86:* At Kilinochchi in north Sri Lanka, 7 Tamil civilians who were travelling in a tractor were shot dead, and one was injured. At Muthur in the eastern province, 5 Muslims were shot dead by the security forces and their bodies set on fire.

★ *18.3.86:* The inhabitants of Myliddy, Palaly, Kankesanthurai and Karainagar in the Jaffna district have been fleeing from their homes because of continuous naval shelling.

★ *20.3.86:* About 75 Tamil civilians, while returning from work, were arrested in eastern Batticaloa.

★ *21.3.86:* Canons were fired from within the army camps in Karainagar, Navatkuli and Jaffna resulting in the deaths of 3 persons and injury to 29 persons. Over 200 Tamils were arrested between Kalladippalam and Manchanthoduwai in Batticaloa.

★ *24.3.86:* Two Tamil civilians were shot dead by the security forces in Mannar.

★ *25.3.86:* At least 5 Tamil civilians were killed in Vavuniya when the army went about indiscriminately shooting in retaliation for a land mine explosion allegedly planted by a Tamil militant group. 3 soldiers were killed and 3 others injured when their vehicle hit a landmine on the Habarana-Trincomalee road. The Jaffna bound Yarl Devi train was blown up and set on fire at Omanthai presumably by a Tamil militant group.

★ *27.3.86:* Tellipalai in the Jaffna district was subjected to aerial attack by the security forces in which one Tamil civilian was killed and several others injured.

★ *28.3.86:* At least 5 members of the security forces were killed and some more injured at Kinniya in Trincomalee when their jeep hit a landmine.

THE NEDUNKERNY MASSACRE

Up to 18 Tamils, including women and pensioners, were killed by Sri Lankan troops on the morning of 20 March during an 'operation' in the village of Nedunkerny, Vavuniya, in northern Sri Lanka.

According to eye-witness accounts, soldiers dressed in black uniforms moved in and surrounded the village, set fire to scores of houses, looted shops, and as the people began to flee, they were shot at indiscriminately.

Of the victims, five people were burnt inside a shop. The troops took away the bodies of seven persons. The ages of the victims ranged from 25 to 60 and included a woman aged 25. Three people, two male pensioners and a forty-five year old woman were seriously injured.

As usual, the Ministry of National Security has described the victims as 'terrorists'.

Rampage in Nainativu

At last four civilians were killed and about 15 persons were injured when navy and army personnel, including black-uniformed commandos, went on a rampage in Nainativu, an island a few miles off the northern Jaffna peninsula regarded as sacred by both Hindus and Buddhists, on 3 March. Many houses, shops and fishing boats were set on fire, and two temple chariots, the manjam, the chapparam and doorway of the historic Nagapooshani Amman Hindu temple were gutted in the course of this rampage. The troops also looted many properties before setting fire to them.

The rampage was apparently in retaliation to the blasting of a naval boat by a sea-mine alleged to have been planted by a Tamil guerrilla group. Three naval personnel were reportedly killed and 6 injured in the blast.

LETTERS – *continued*

Tamil Viewpoint in China and Japan

YOUR THOUGHTFUL editorial "On the Road to Nirvana with Zia" (February 1986) is to be commended. In it, you had observed that the level of knowledge of the truth of what is happening in Sri Lanka is also rising in the world's media. However, I sincerely feel that we (expatriate Tamils living outside Sri Lanka) have to do much more to inform the world.

Let us consider the Asian region itself. Of the three dominant countries (India, China and Japan), only India has come to understand the problems and sufferings of Tamils. How much have we done to explain the Tamil point of view to the Chinese and Japanese? I know that we have limited resources and that language is another serious barrier.

The Sri Lankan government has its official resources to propagate *its version* of the fight against Tamil "terrorism". When Jayawardene visited China and Japan, he had tried (successfully to a limited extent!) to curry favour by projecting the Buddhistic image of his regime and suggesting that Tamils (terrorists, to his Government) are supported by the predominantly Hindu India. Whether Chinese and Japanese practise the Sri Lankan Theravada-style of Buddhism is a different matter altogether. However, Jayawardene had intentionally pursued this 'Buddhistic' path to receive military aid from China and economic aid from Japan.

Having recently arrived in Japan, I read, with not a little amusement, the February 4th Sri Lankan Independence Day messages which appeared in the English newspapers of Japan. Jayawardene and Premadasa, as usual, had promised to destroy and eradicate Tamil terrorists in Sri Lanka within this year. We will have to wait and see how they are going to succeed.

But, let us not live in a fool's paradise, that the plight of Sri Lankan Tamils is well known to the rest of the world. We have hardly done anything at all to inform the non-English speaking world about the Tamil struggle for justice and equality.

I sincerely feel that an understanding and recognition by the Chinese and the Japanese of the Tamil liberation fight is very important, and should be urgently sought. In the fight for freedom and its subsequent recognition, Tamils should not leave any stone unturned.

Since I hold a Sri Lankan passport, to safeguard my professional interests, I should appreciate if you refrain from publishing my name.

A Reader in Tokyo

MULTIRACIAL SEMINAR AND CONCERT

The Mayor of Brent, Councillor Roger Stone, was the Chief Guest at the above seminar organised by the Tamil Association of Brent and chaired by its President, Mr. P. Shanmuganathan, at the Aylestone School Hall, London NW6 on 15 March.

Rev. John Knight spoke of the hardship faced by Sri Lankan Tamils both in Sri Lanka and as asylum-seekers abroad. He argued that it was inhumane for the Home Office to deport Tamils who are already here, and unfair not to issue work permits for those temporarily admitted. He deplored the Sri Lankan Government's attempts to destroy Tamil Culture in Sri Lanka and its bombing and strafing of innocent civilians. He said that Tamils should weed out rivalry, jealousy and hatred from their hearts and unite to survive, and should let the world know that they are a people with a great history, a great culture and a great tradition.

The other speakers were Councillor Ford (Deputy Mayor) who spoke on "Preserving one's own culture", Councillor M. Maglorie on "The struggle for racial equality", Mr. D.S. Monocha on "Racial Harmony", and Mr. S. Ramaligam on "Multiracial Britain".

The programme ended with a concert in which the following artists took part: Smt K. Anandarajan (vocal), Dr. L. Jayan (violin), Smt P. Ganesan (veena), Smt S. Ramachandran (dance) and Sri R. Rajalingham (mirudangam).

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